

BENEDICT

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THE CONCEPT OF THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT
IN NORTH AMERICA

BY

RUTH FULTON BENEDICT

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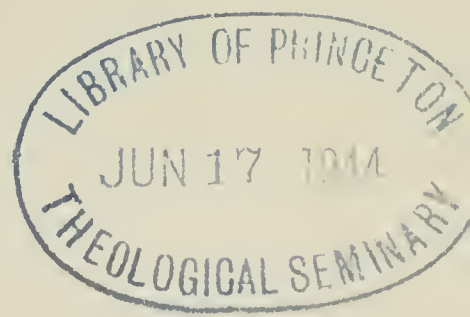
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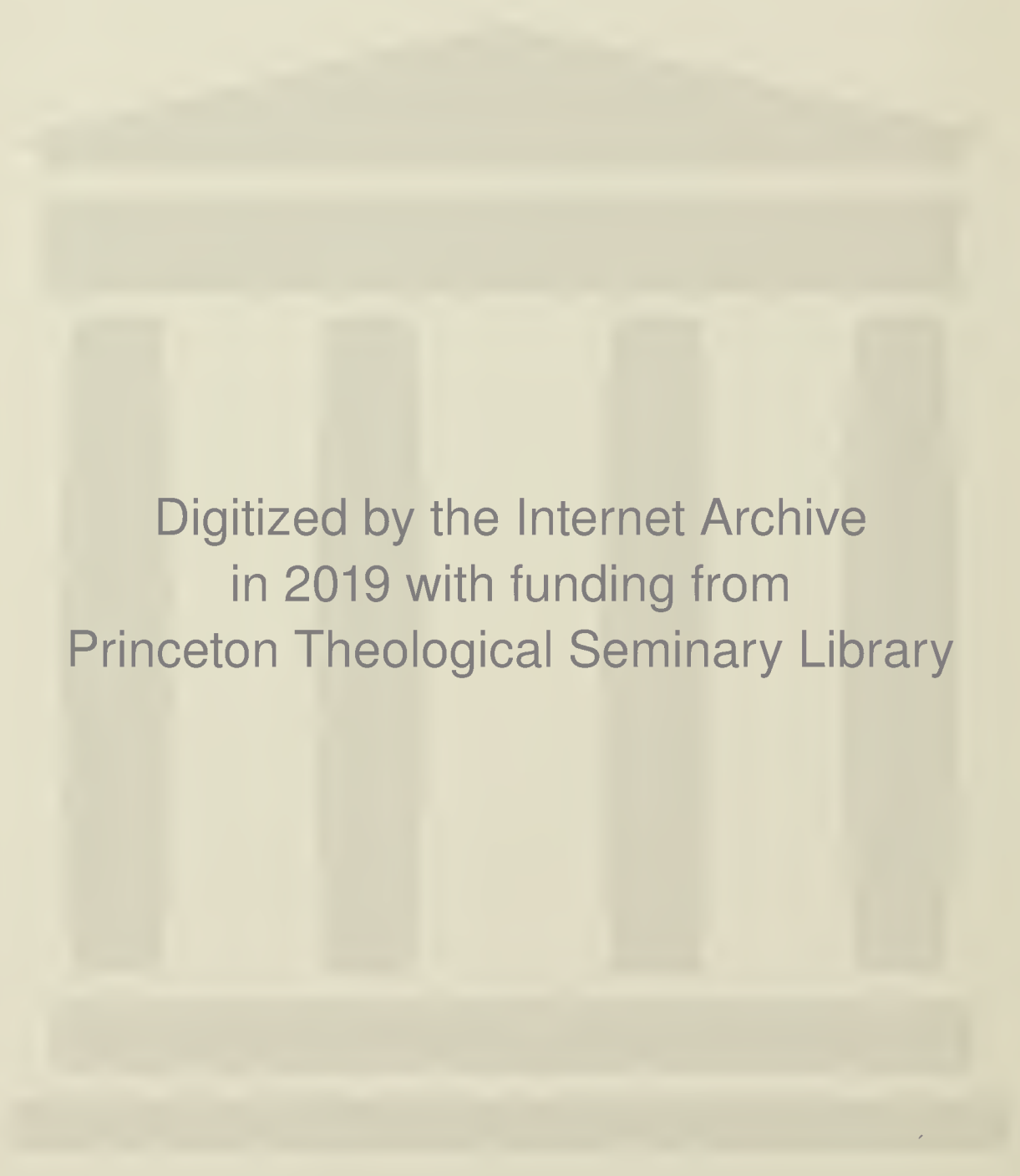
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THE CONCEPT OF THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT IN NORTH AMERICA

BY RUTH FULTON BENEDICT

INTRODUCTION

THE notable contributions that have been made in the last twenty-five years toward the understanding of early religious thought and practice have from a certain point of view set themselves a common goal. Their problem has been to interpret the observed phenomena as the result of some one psychic process, usually designated as the "origin." A vast amount of material has been brought together on this basis, and certain particular generalizations will undoubtedly stand for the future as they do for the present. Tylor's animism is beyond question a universal state of mind among primitive man; and Marett's formulation of *mana*, whether or not it must be pre-animistic, is of very great importance in understanding deep-seated religious attitudes.

These generalizations, however, are in a class quite by themselves. Animism is not properly in itself a theoretical matter at all, but an ethnographical, descriptive one; it is not necessary to claim that it should be a priori discoverable. Durkheim, on the contrary, defends a thesis of another order. His "origin" is not one established by observed fact, but by complex argumentation. He finds the source of all religious attitudes and practices in the underlying reality of the "social."¹ Crawley substitutes "the biological crises of individual life";² McDougall, fear;³ Lang, experiences of a psychic type.⁴ Frazer especially has argued a number of origins of this sort.⁵

¹Durkheim: *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*.

² Crawley: *Origin and Function of Religion*, pp. 243-249.

³ McDougall: *Social Psychology*, p. 305.

⁴ Lang: *Making of Religion*.

⁵ See especially, *The Golden Bough*, vol. XI, pp. 218, 273.

In an undertaking the object of which is to formulate "the" origin, "the" law back of the phenomena, the fact of the number and variety of these theses in itself indicates a considerable fallacy. Religious theory is in fact preëminently liable to contradictions. Its very subject matter is in dispute. Whatever the disagreements in the problems of primitive social organization, the recognition of a clan, or of form of descent, is not a subjective judgment; apart from all theoretical attitudes and conclusions, there is a certain fixed field of inquiry, there are certain data which every investigator must take into account. In erecting theories of religion, however, even in our choice of subject matter, we are fatally free. We have only to compare the data from which Tylor argued with that which Lang uses on the one hand or Durkheim on the other, or the essential contradictions as to scope and definition upheld in the half-dozen discussions of the demarcation between religion and magic. Or, again, "religion" is denied in toto by trained ethnographers to the Australia Blackfellows⁶ and the Indians of Canada.⁷ It is only when we put aside philosophical discussions and turn to the descriptive monographs that we find that in spite of the theorists there is a very fair degree of similarity in the type of facts that are discussed under the heading of "religion."

Now if the trails that have been made through this confused tract by means of various origin-theories have come out at such far-distant points that we cannot but feel a doubt of trusting ourselves to any one of them, does that exhaust the possibilities of exploration? May we not make another track in a quite different way—that is, by fixing our attention on some one well-recognized cultural trait, and subjecting to analysis its observed behavior over a fairly wide area? Such an analysis might conceivably point in the same direction as some one of the "origin" reconstructions, and so reinforce it from a different

⁶ Frazer: *Totemism and Exogamy*, III, p. 142.

⁷ Hill-Tout: *British North America*, p. 166.

point of view. It might have little bearing, and yet suggest other historical possibilities. At any rate, it is worth experimenting with. It is the only way in which we can keep close to the actual concrete material, and yet take into account the historic process. It is likewise the only way in which we can be sure we are not falling into an interpretation from mere logical or psychological plausibility. In no studies of the purely comparative type is it possible to be always on one's guard against this insidious temptation; yet nothing is clearer in ethnology than that psychological validity is an almost negligible detail, capable of becoming attached to anything and everything, and that the crucial point is always to determine which it was of all these indefinitely numerous plausible potentialities which did actually and historically secure social recognition among a given people.

Any such "behavioristic" analysis of a given religious culture-trait should give us help in two directions: (1) toward historical reconstruction, by determining its distribution and the presence or absence of associated ideas, (2) toward a more just psychological understanding of the data. It is only by such an analysis that we can get an insight into the rôle which the particular concept plays in different tribal settings, and the sort of relation it establishes with the tribal background. We can then arrive at some understanding of what happens in the inner life, as it were, of beliefs and practices assimilated into diverse tribal complexes, and judge to some extent whether or not it is some fixed causality which is at work.

Religion, however surely its ultimate source is in the individual mind, for purposes of discussion is yet first and foremost and all the time a matter of social patterning. It is not something—in Marett's phrase—that by a kind of parthenogenesis springs full-born from the religious instinct of the individual it is as definitely handed down through the generations as any piece of loom technique, and is as subject to all the intricate fortunes of diffusion. It is the particular value of anthropology

to have elaborated methods for dealing with this kind of cultural phenomena, and it should be as valuable to apply them in the matter of religious belief and practice as in the study of the cut of tribal garments, and the insignia of primitive secret societies.

We shall, therefore, in this paper, attempt an analysis of one religious concept, that of the guardian spirit, in its area of distribution in North America. The analysis is based on the published relevant material, in large part the monographs on the several tribes of North America. There are therefore unavoidable gaps and disproportions due to lack of information, as, for instance, in the Southeast area of the continent. More than this, however, even in the accounts of competent observers, in areas that have been repeatedly studied, the comparability of material from the various tribes and especially from the various major culture areas is often a matter of doubt. A trait which has been emphasized in one area may be genuinely absent in another area; on the other hand, it may have been merely omitted; or, again, it may have been so differently stated that its comparability with the material in question could be determined only by renewed investigation in the field. This source of error cannot at the present time be eliminated from a study such as this, and further investigations may reject certain specific statements which are quoted in this discussion. The caution must be borne constantly in mind, and it is for this reason that there is in this paper no discussion of the relation of the guardian-spirit concept to the idea of *mana*, or impersonal magic power. The comparative data for this are too unstandardized, too subject to the personal equation. The most that can be done on this subject for some time to come is in the accumulation of material from individuals of many tribes.

Even in the more objectively determinable issues which are raised in this paper the same source of error must not be lost sight of; it explains the impossibility of assigning complete

distribution to most of the phenomena, and the necessity of avoiding conclusions which would be invalidated by the discovery of an exception. With every allowance for the methodological limitations, there is nevertheless much concerning the nature of culture-traits that can reasonably be investigated from the available material.

I. TYPES OF GUARDIAN SPIRIT EXPERIENCE

The concept of the guardian spirit as it is found in North America has an enormously wide distribution. Its historical unity is of course obvious to Graebner, Elliot Smith, and their schools; the mere catalogue of the facts as they have been authoritatively reported from eastern Siberia, across the length and breadth of North America, and down into South America, is for them entirely sufficient. But more than this, the concept in some form or other is not only recognizable as locally present over this vast area; the distribution is also, except for certain tribal variations and overlays, continuous. These overlays, as we shall see, are typically secondary explanations attaching to the habitual guardian-spirit practices of the area. From a psychological point of view such cases as the Pawnee or the Mohave do indeed break the continuity; not, however, from the historical.

It has always been rare to find this distinction recognized. The fact of historical connection has usually in theoretical discussions been regarded as involving a psychological unity of rôle. The two aspects are, however, by no means equivalent. Historical unity we can read from the face-value of the facts of distribution; psychological unity or lack of unity, on the contrary, can be determined only by a critical analysis of its connotations, and of the rôles which the concept plays in cultural life.

It is exceedingly difficult to realize in its full force the divergence of these connotations and rôles in the case of the guardian-spirit concept. Ideally it should be possible to construct a composite picture of these beliefs as they play their part in

each of the major areas of unlike culture on the continent. This, however, is impossible; divergences in each culture area, even between tribes in close association, are too great. In spite of this, it is nevertheless true that each of the culture areas of North America has a certain identifiable interpretation of the guardian-spirit idea, and it is possible to give some notion of this briefly by description of the concept as it appears in rather arbitrarily selected tribes.

The type picture of the North American guardian-spirit practices corresponds most nearly to the customs of the Plateau area, let us say the Thompson River Indians.⁸ There was here the isolation in the mountains at puberty, the long ceremonial purification, the intentness upon supernatural communication, and the acquisition of the name and power and song of the guardian spirit in a vision. For months or even years the youths carried out strict dietary regulations with frequent rigid fasts; purged themselves with medicine, and induced vomiting by pliant sticks; purified themselves by sweat bathing, followed by a plunge into the cold stream. There were no limitations of rank or ownership upon the experience or the tutelary spirits; the quest was open to and incumbent upon all the young men of the tribe.

But the practices did not drive so straight to the mark as it might appear. The emphasis upon the rites of the adolescent girl and the adolescent boy was with the Thompson very nearly equal. In the boys' ceremonial the guardian-spirit idea was the dominant motive; in the girls', it was very nearly lacking. It was not that there was absolute sex-taboo in the matter of tutelaries; girls might obtain a basket, a kettle, or a root-digger, or, among the animals, a mountain goat. But these exceptions played little part in their adolescent rites, which were motivated by other ideas than the attainment of tutelaries. Yet both the boys' and the girls' puberty rites were in the main the expression of one idea—that "cleanness" and endurance at this period

⁸ Teit: Thompson Indians.

affected the adult life directly. Thus the girl sat in her seclusion-lodge picking off the needles from great spruce branches, one by one, that she might never be lazy. Or, if she wished to grow taller, she cut her lodge-pole long, and stretched herself by it, praying to the Dawn. The boy spent his time in activities of sympathetic magic that had a like import. Those who desired to become hunters practised hunting and shooting in a ceremonial way; those who desired to become warriors performed mimic battles. The would-be gamblers played with gambling sticks. At night the youths made round holes in boulders with a jade adze to make their arms tireless and their hands dextrous.

This dominant idea of puberty training in the vision quest of the Thompson is clear also in other ways. The vision and the acquisition of the guardian spirit was here not necessarily the climax of the experience.⁹ After the guardian spirit manifested itself, the training continued; only now the suppliant addressed his guardian spirit in his prayers, not the Dawn of Day. The direct concern with magical apprenticeship for adult life had brought about also the only classification of spirits that was recognized by the Thompson—that into patrons of the several professions. The animals and things which might become guardian spirits were almost limitless, including the weather, dwarfs, the nipple of a gun, horseflies, kettles, and objects referring to death. But very nearly all the natural phenomena of the world were distinctive as guardian spirits of one or other profession. Shamans, warriors, fishermen, hunters, and gamblers had each their recognizable guardians. The hunter called on his guardian spirit for success with the deer, the gambler for luck in the game, and the shaman to tell him the cause of illness and the means of curing it. Those who had similar guardian spirits, however, recognized no other sort of social bond; there were no collective rites of any sort, not even temporary groupings in ceremonial, for guardian spirits

⁹ Teit: Lillooet, p. 265.

were avoided in their imitative dancing, and they satisfied themselves with mimicry of prairie chickens, hares, or geese which had, they considered, no magic power.¹⁰

On the coast, northwest of the Thompson, are the Kwakiutl Indians, whose guardian-spirit attitudes and practices present an almost categorical antithesis to those of the Thompson River.¹¹ The guardian spirit here was an hereditary caste mark. Rights to the particular guardian were determined by inheritance, by marriage, and by killing the former owner. One might not see a tutelary in his vision until his family had arranged to "pay for his ecstasy"; a marriage must have been arranged with a woman having the hereditary right to pass on the "crest"; in addition, the elders of the group assembled in council must have given their consent.¹² In fact the guardian spirit experience had been here so taken up into the complex social organization that any regulation of the social structure must necessarily work through the regulation of the usual guardian spirits. The tutelaries, then, were preëminently the badge of rank in the clan and in the secret societies. Social progress in both was made by the acquisition of additional guardians. They were wealth directly also; guardian spirits, their insignia, the legends of their past encounters with ancestors, had come to be of more value as personal possessions than any other form of private property.

This character of the guardian-spirit experience as wealth and badge of rank had of course made fundamental changes in practice. The vision by which theoretically the guardian spirit was attained had become formal to a degree; the specific "vision" character of the experience was here translated into an elaborate dramatization of seclusion with the spirits, "possession," and of the restoration to normal conditions. This dramatization underlay the greater part of the enormously

¹⁰ Boas: Art, in Teit, Thompson River Indians, p. 385.

¹¹ Boas: Kwakiutl.

¹² Boas: Report on Northwest Tribes, p. 830.

elaborate winter ceremonial. It associated with itself their custom of "potlatching," so that it became essential, when a man returned under the influence of the spirits and gave his hereditary dance, that blankets should be distributed in his name to all those who were present.¹³

The second fundamental change occasioned by the concept of the guardian spirit as hereditary wealth was in the character of the tutelaries themselves. They became very definitely limited in numbers, and in the process, and under the double influence of art and legend, very strongly individualized as mythological characters. The limitless guardians of the Thompson are unthinkable here; we have instead Wīnā'lag'ilīs, Making-War-over-all-the-Earth, who never leaves off traveling in his canoe, and BaxbakuālanuXsī'waē, the cannibal from whose house red smoke arises, while his slave, the raven, eats the eyes of his master's victims, and a fabulous bird lives upon their brains.¹⁴

These mythological beings are further individualized with very definite gifts which they bestow upon those within their protection; the idea is no longer here as among the Thompson that one partakes of the natural characteristics of one's guardian spirit, but is instead definitely determined by the folkloristic background.

It is curious to follow out the elaborate adaptation of some one particular feature which is found only as a hint in another setting. We have seen that among the Thompson, as in very many other tribes, a man received a name from his guardian spirit. Among the Thompson this name was sometimes inherited, in connection particularly with their conception of rebirth of relatives in children born soon after their death. But among the Kwakiutl, this hint of a new name, taken up into the social system, became, for a large part of the year, the

¹³ Boas: Kwakiutl Texts, p. 489, for description of the return of the "Cannibal."

¹⁴ Boas: Kwakiutl, p. 394.

basis of rank and organization in the tribe. When the winter ceremonial began, the "season of the secrets," clan names were dropped, and each man assumed his tutelary name. The whole clan organization being based on names, it assumed a different aspect altogether, and the tribe was grouped for the winter months, not according to birth, but according to the spirits who had initiated them.

If among the Thompson the guardian spirits were procured by all men of the tribe, and among the Kwakiutl were omitted only because of low social rank, among the Shasta of California they were solely the prerogative of the shamans.¹⁵ Tutelaries tended to present themselves to the children of medicine men, or medicine women, since the greater number of Shasta shamans were women. Predisposition, however, was essential, and manifested itself in stereotyped dreams. During this time dietary taboos are observed, and then suddenly some day, as the shaman is about her regular work, she will "die," and, in her trance, see her guardian spirit. These tutelaries are of very set character. Every Shasta who has a vision sees an Axeki, a man in appearance, but very small, carrying a tiny bow and arrow. This Axeki sings him a song which he must repeat on pain of immediate death. If he succeeds, the song is his to use in his medicine practice, and the Axeki tells him his name and where he lives. He then gives him his peculiar insignia as a shaman: the "pain"—a short, sharpened splinter as of glass, or ice, which he will carry throughout life.

The prospective shaman must now gather together the necessary "pain" paraphernalia: ten buckskins, ten silver-gray fox skins, ten wolf skins, ten coyote skins, tail and wing feathers of ten eagles, et cetera. These must be at hand before he attempts his first cure and a similar collection must be obtained severally for each "pain" procured. Since all shamans obtained three "pains" in the first year, it was several years before the collection was complete. When these had been collected, a five-

¹⁵ Dixon: Shasta.

nights' dance was held, culminating in further trances, and tribal dances were undertaken as a sign of readiness to qualify as a completely equipped shaman.

The guardian-spirit concept on the Great Plains had developed along still different lines. There is enormous tribal diversity; the Crow, however, illustrate, along with their own tribal bias, certain widely diffused Plains traits. In the first place, there was no limitation of age or sex, so far as a vision was concerned; "middle-aged and even old men would go out fasting."¹⁶ And the vision was commonly obtained after definite pursuit, carried on by isolation, fasting, and self-torture. Those who were the recipients of involuntary visions were regarded as exceptionally fortunate since they escaped the necessity of torturing themselves.¹⁷ The average warrior retired to the mountains fasting, and tortured himself by some form of self-laceration. "Medicine Crow," for instance, "fasted for four days. He cut off a finger and offered it to the Sun, 'Sun look at me, I am poor. I wish to own horses. Make me wealthy. That is why I give you my little finger.' The blood poured down. He fell dead. Toward dawn he saw a young man and a young woman coming from the west." They talked with him, gave him medicine and showed him each twenty head of horses. They turned out to be Tobacco, and gave him ceremonial directions concerning the Tobacco Society. Subsequently he came to own many horses and organized a chapter of the Tobacco Society, according to his instructions in his vision.¹⁸

The seeking of visions is, with the Crow, a much more general institution than that of procuring a guardian spirit. Visions are sought also for mourning, for revenge, for war parties, for calling the buffalo, for naming children, or for general strengthening. The tutelaries are nearly always animals

¹⁶ Lowie: *Religion of the Crow*, p. 332.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 325.

¹⁸ Lowie: *Crow Tobacco Society*, p. 117.

though they appear in human form during the action of the vision. They give always a song, a "power," and describe some memento which the man immediately procures and carries throughout life as a token of his vision. The maturity of the suppliant, the sought vision, the torture, the medicine bundle, are all held rather widely on the Plains; the special characteristic of the experience to the Crow, however, is a definitely local development, found only in weak forms in neighboring tribes. The Crow vision is a ceremonial "adoption" by the tutelary spirits. It is a characteristic pattern of Crow life: the ceremonial transfer conceived as an adoption. In the Tobacco Society this germ has developed into the basis of the organization of the most prominent ceremonial complex in the tribe. The vision merely follows the tribal pattern and adopts its nomenclature. The regular phrase for the successful suppliant is "the dwarf-adopted one," "the buffalo-adopted one"; the being addresses him in set words: "I make you my son." And under the influence of this phraseology the Crow comes, at least in certain cases, to conceive a sort of parental responsibility on the part of this "father" that is foreign to the thought of other tribes.

In the Southeast, guardian-spirit practices can be reconstructed only in part. Old records establish the reality of the aboriginal trait,¹⁹ but most customs pertaining to it are now forgotten. It has also been modified in different ways by its contact with the totemic idea in the sib organization. Among the Chickasaw²⁰ the guardian-spirit concept is found incorporated in the totemic system as the common property of all men of the tribe. "The totem of the clan is also the guardian spirit of the men of that clan, who hold their totem animal and his earthly representative as guides, kinsmen, and special overseers." It is a democratic rite in the same sense

¹⁹ Charlevoix and Luxembourg Memoir, in Swanton, *Tribes of the Lower Mississippi*, pp. 178, 179; Hawkins: *Creek Confederacy*, p. 78.

²⁰ Speck: *Chickasaw*.

that it was for the Crow, but the guardian-spirit experience—that is, the vision—has become split off, and is here the prerogative of the shaman. The aspirant had to buy from an old shaman the instructions for diagnosis, the herbs, and the songs. The real power, however, came from “the little people of his clan”—his ancestors, that is, in the broadest sense of the words, conceived as spirits living in the woods. To seek them, the candidate fasted in the woods alone and entirely naked except for the red ceremonial paint, while “the people of his clan” cared for him, and taught him in detail all he should know.

The Yuchi data make this even plainer.²¹ The great annual scarification ceremony in the public square-ground was primarily a totemic rite. For the youth it was, however, an equivalent of the usual acquisition of a guardian spirit. So far from having lost the guardian-spirit idea in this reinterpretation, the concept formed the basis of their hunting and fishing and war. In all three it was primarily a matter of overthrowing the guardian spirit first, of the animal, or fish, or enemy. Only so could they hope to overthrow their bodies.

None of all these varying concepts of the character and rôle of the guardian spirit, however, would give us a hint of the attitude which prevails among the Penobscot and the affiliated tribes of eastern Canada. Here the guardian spirit is essentially a disguise which the shaman is able to assume in punishing trespassers upon his family hunting territory, and in supernatural contests with rival shamans. Only shamans, family or tribal, have guardian spirits. The usual way to acquire one was to go out by the shore of a lake or in the woods and sing to it. “Gradually it would appear and the witch man would stroke it with his hand in order to bind it to him as a servant.”²² But the sanction of this experience was not, except in extraordinary circumstances, the power of healing; doctoring was

²¹ Speck: *The Yuchi*.

²² Speck: *Penobscot Shamanism*, p. 252.

an essentially popular herbalism disassociated from magic or religion.²³

The great sanction obtained from guardian spirits among the Penobscot was supremacy in magic contests with rival shamans. Tales of these rivalries formed the great bulk of all Wabanaki mythology. The literal meaning of the native word designating these guardian spirits is "that by which magic is performed." While these helpers were away on their errands, the owner remained inert; if the helper was killed, the shaman would also die. There was no organization among these *baohigan*-possessors; there were, however, two different sorts: first, the family-group shaman, whose function was to protect the family hunting grounds against trespassers; and second, the village or tribal shaman, whose contests with the representatives of other villages and tribes were so important a part of native thought. Those shamans who protected the family hunting grounds figure in a number of myths,²⁴ and they both detected the intruder and spiritually persecuted him.

Among the Central Eskimo and those of Baffin Land, guardian-spirit practices, along with all sorts of other cultural customs and beliefs, are knit up with the myth of the origin of sea animals.²⁵ The acquisition of a guardian makes one a shaman; and, besides the necessary meeting with the monster or bear or spirit-woman, payment for instruction to an accredited shaman may be required. The powers which the guardian gives are all to be understood only by reference to the Sedna legend. All sea animals were created from the fingers of this woman, who had power to give or to withhold these animals from the hunters. Lack of success is caused by the violations of taboo on the part of any Eskimo in the tribe, and these cause, in their conception, certain dark attachments to Sedna herself,

²³ Speck: Medical Practices of the Northeastern Algonkians.

²⁴ Speck: Penobscot Tales, pp. 23, 35, 64.

²⁵ Boas: Religious Beliefs of the Central Eskimo; The Eskimo of Baffin Land.

and to the offender. These are visible to all sea animals, but can be seen among humans only by those with guardian spirits. The preëminent use to which tutelaries are put is to detect these attachments and to remove them. Once every year, or in some communities only when bad weather and starvation continue for a long time, an important ceremony is held in which powerful *angedkok* visit Sedna in the under-world, by help of their guardian spirits, and free her of all accumulated attachments.

The medical practices of the *angedkok* are directed by the same ideas. These attachments cause illness to the transgressor, and if not removed, he must die. Absolute truth is obligatory in answering the shaman's questions, who by help of his tutelary will divine the broken taboo, which is then completely removed by confession.

A survey such as this of the varying conceptions of the nature and rôle of the guardian spirit among the American Indians could be indefinitely extended. These examples have been chosen as more or less roughly indicating the concept in the major culture areas of North America. They cannot possibly even indicate divergencies that are in certain aspects fundamental between even contiguous tribes. The guardian spirit may descend by inheritance, by purchase, or by adoption in three neighboring tribes, and in the fourth be obtained exclusively by a vision induced by torture. It may be sought by an isolated fast, or induced by a jimson weed decoction, or regarded as essentially unsought. It may be undertaken at puberty or by mature men. It may have entered into a close relationship with the social organization, or it may stand conspicuously outside.

II. THE COMMON ELEMENT

In the midst of such diversity, is there yet some common element, some aspect which holds for all guardian-spirit attitudes, no matter how divergent? The difficulty has been that it is too closely interwoven with the whole concept of the

tutelary to be commented upon: the vision has passed, with anthropologists as with the aborigines, as an inextricably involved element. Nevertheless there is logically nothing at all in the guardian-spirit concept that calls for its association with that of a psychic experience. Their relationship is dialectically fortuitous, and it is of the first importance to realize the formality of the convention by which they are found associated together. If the vision over all North America runs by a formula according to which some animal, or voice, or thing appears to the suppliant and talks with him, describing the power bestowed on him and giving him songs, mementoes, taboos, and perhaps ceremonial procedure, and thereafter remains his life-long protector, the matter is highly formal, and has not assumed its present aspect by psychological necessity.

We can see this most vividly from illustrations of guardian-spirit concepts from other continents where this connection with the vision does not exist. Guardian spirits played a large rôle among the Chukchee of eastern Siberia, as village, house, and individual tutelaries. Psychic experiences were likewise exceedingly common, and formed the stock-in-trade of their shamans. The two, however, had no particular relation to each other; a man acquired a tutelary by stumbling over an oddly shaped stone, or bit of wood, or by fashioning something himself.²⁶

Among the Euahlayi of Australia, all medicine men have tutelaries which are known as *yunbeai*. They have their abode in animals, and the eating of their flesh is taboo to the individual. Injury to the animal causes injury to the owner. He can assume its shape in danger. They are, however, bestowed by shamans; they are "acquired by chance"—when very ill, the medicine man will bestow *yunbeai* in order to strengthen the patient or, on his death-bed, will give it to a successor.²⁷

²⁶ Bogoras: Chukchee, Religion, pp. 88-90.

²⁷ Parker: Euahlayi Tribe, pp. 20, 21.

Among the Wiranjuri, in the proceeding that makes one a shaman, father and son go out to the bush together. The father places two large quartz crystals against the boy's breast, and they vanish into him. This makes him clever and able to bring things up—that is, produce crystals that cause illness. After a proceeding at a grave, the father points to an animal, in this case a tiger snake, saying “that is your *budjam* (tutelary); it is mine also.”²⁸

The Watchantis regard the soul of the first man slain by a young warrior as his “woorie” or warning spirit, which enters his body and forewarns him of danger throughout life.²⁹

In the island of Mota in the Banks Islands, not everyone had a personal tutelary; only some men fancied that they had this relation to a lizard, a snake, or it might be a stone. Sometimes the thing was sought for and found by drinking the infusion of certain leaves, and heaping together the dregs; then whatever living thing was first seen in or upon the heap was the *tamaniiu*.³⁰ In the Banks Islands in general, a man who had entered into such a relation was known as the “owner” of the spirit, and made requests of it in behalf of a client, accompanied by offerings of native money.³¹

In the Philippines, among the Bagobo, there are personal war gods to whom prayer sticks are erected at certain festivals. They belong to those who have distinguished themselves by exploit, and thereafter make them brave, and punish infractions of the rules of ceremonial war-deed boasting.³²

In Samoa, tutelary deities were determined at birth. The help of proper spirits was invoked in succession, and the one who happened to be addressed just as the child was born was fixed upon as the guardian. These spirits were embodied in

²⁸ Howitt: Southeast Australia, pp. 406, 407.

²⁹ Tylor: Primitive Culture, p. 200.

³⁰ Codrington: The Melanesians, p. 250 sq.

³¹ Codrington: Melanesians (in Hastings's Encyclopedia of Religion).

³² Benedict: Bagobo Ceremonial, p. 149.

some visible incarnation, and the owner never injured it or treated it with contempt; he never ate its flesh.³³

Among the Malays, the Pawang, or medicine man, keeps a familiar spirit. It may descend from father to son, but a man may obtain one by the proper process. He must take the midribs of three cocoanut palms and carry them with the help of a companion to the grave of a murdered man, at the time of the full moon when it falls on Tuesday. He fumigates the grave, calling upon the dead man by name in a set formula. He then fumigates one of the cocoa palm midribs, laying it at the head of the grave. The applicant and his companion must now use the other two midribs as canoe paddles, symbolizing their journey to the shades, when the murdered man will appear, and to him he addresses his formula as before. The ghost is henceforth his familiar.³⁴

The Ewe (Matse Stamm) of the African Slave Coast have an entirely different conception of the individual protector. Life and death in this world are understood by them as a continuation and consequence of a preëxisting life. When a man is about to leave the other life, he is obliged to give a promise as to the length of time he will remain away. When this is up in this world, he will die. The husband or wife of the other life who is left behind by the man or woman at birth is the guardian spirit of this life. It is these spirits' duty to protect their relatives here. The man on his marriage in this world takes good care that his preëxisting wife shall be propitiated with drink and clothing, and the new wife tends for her a little altar behind the house. If she is satisfied, she grants them children, and gives good fortune for life.³⁵

The Tshi-speaking people of the Gold Coast, again, obtain their tutelaries by personal initiative. These are known as *suhnan*. A person goes out into the recesses of the forest where

³³ Turner: Samoa, page 17.

³⁴ Skeat: Malay Magic, p. 58 sq.

³⁵ Spieth: Die Ewe, p. 806 sq.

Sasabonsum, the evil deity, has his home. Here he prepares some object of specified sort—a branch roughly notched to indicate head and body, red earth mixed to a paste with blood or rum, etc.—and calls upon a spirit of Sasabonsum to enter it. To test whether the spirit has done so, he squeezes certain leaves upon the object saying, “Eat this and speak,” when a low hissing sound is heard if such is the case. If he is satisfied, he takes it home and watches it for three days. If he has good fortune, he presents it with offerings and uses it to bring harm to his enemies. If not, he begins again from the beginning.³⁶

It is usual to consider the bush soul of the Cameroons, and other parts of West Africa, as an individual tutelary,³⁷ though it is generally a liability rather than an asset³⁸ as individual spirit helpers are more generally considered to be. However, there are similarities. A man’s life is bound up with the life of his bush-soul animal, and offerings are made to it during sickness from the idea that the bush-soul is angry at being neglected. A person may take the bush-soul of his father or mother, but, in any case, unless a man is a diviner, he cannot see his own bush-soul, and a medicine man must be called in to indicate it for him.³⁹

In contrast with such heterogeneous practices and beliefs, in North America the vision is fundamental in the guardian-spirit complex. Abnormal psychology has of late years given us a mass of material by which to understand these Indian visions. It is no longer necessary to discuss the question of whether or not they were feigned. Certainly they were to the Indian unquestionable means of obtaining power. Their authority was absolute. People thus blest were generally, on the Plains, regarded as bullet-proof, and they advanced in battle accordingly. Heckewelder writes of the Delaware in

³⁶ Ellis: *The Tshi-speaking People*, p. 98 sq.

³⁷ See N. W. Thomas: “Perhaps only our limited knowledge disguises their identity.” In Article: *Animal: Nagual*, in Hastings’s *Encyclopedia of Religion*.

³⁸ But see Talbot, *Shadow of the Bush*, p. 80 sq.

³⁹ Kingsley: *Travels in West Africa*, p. 459, sq.

1800, "The belief in the truth of these visions is universal among the Indians. I have spoken with several of their old men who had been highly distinguished for their valor, and asked them whether they ascribed their achievements to natural or supernatural causes and they uniformly answered that, as they knew beforehand what they could do, they did it, of course."⁴⁰ A tall tree stood in the region of the Kootenay, from which Indians had thrown themselves in recent times in the belief that they had been granted the power of flying.⁴¹ A similar attempt is recorded of a Blackfoot medicine man who nevertheless survived his leap from the cliff.⁴²

According to the Indian pattern, psychic experiences were socially recognized and made the very cornerstone of their cultural life. We shall see that there is an enormous tribal conventionalization of the vision events. Nevertheless, recorded experiences from every part of North America all go to prove one point: that a feeling of significance, a "thrill" of greater or less intensity, was the distinguishing mark of the vision. The Blackfoot makes this plain in a case where vision experiences were remarkably unstereotyped. These consisted of occurrences of the ordinary daily type—an animal, bird, or thing, seen by the suppliant in some everyday connection: the swollen white wood-worm which crawled out of a decaying log as it began to burn on the hearth; the eagle, under whose particularly tall nesting tree one had unwittingly made camp; the skunk who followed and was fed.⁴³ There were here no formulas; actual and rather minor occurrences acquired on certain occasions emotional coloring and were thereby selected as significant. Dr. Wissler records his impression, "that anything short of a dream or a vision (the normal workings of the mind of a person awake) would be rejected by a body of intelligent Blackfoot as of no medicinal value."⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Heckewelder: *Indians of Pennsylvania*, p. 238.

⁴¹ Chamberlain: *Kootenay*, p. 559.

⁴² Wissler: *Blackfoot Bundles*, p. 77.

⁴³ Wissler: *Blackfoot Traditions*, pp. 91, 104, etc.

⁴⁴ Wissler: *Blackfoot Bundles*, p. 101.

This characteristic of vision experiences is, however, not lost even with striking formalization of the vision content. This is strikingly attested by the persistent record of failure in the quest. Most tribes where information is at all full mention more or less common lack of success. On Puget Sound, out of a family of seven, all of whom sought the spirits, only one brother and sister succeeded.⁴⁵ Of the many Omaha who "spent days and nights in this way, those who met with success were very few."⁴⁶ A Pawnee story tells of a man who pretended success. "There he stayed and cried. He heard no strange noises; neither was he put to sleep in order to be taken into the lodge of the animals, and he knew all the time that he received no power from any one." The story of his pretense is fully moralized.⁴⁷ Among the Bellacoola, if a person falsely pretended to have received the gift of shamanism and tried to suck out diseases from a patient, he would himself fall ill.⁴⁸ Among the Nez Percé pretense aroused the enmity of the guardian animal, who avenged the insult.⁴⁹

Not only were more or less numerous people unable to obtain a vision, but subsequent visions could not always be obtained by one already blest. A Crow, for instance, had a vision during sleep, unsought; but though he afterwards tortured himself with all the usual tribal lacerations, he could not again attain it.⁵⁰ There was therefore, in general, a very definite attitude toward the vision as a recognized experience; one in which success or failure was evident to the seeker. The generalization must not be made too sweeping; the fact of failure was a cultural pattern too. Among the Kwakiutl it would have been absurd; they had made other cultural connections with this concept, and there the vision as an experience was probably as nearly a

⁴⁵ Haeberlin: Puget Sound MSS.

⁴⁶ La Flesche: Omaha Funeral Customs, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Dorsey: The Pawnee, p. 395.

⁴⁸ Boas: Third Report of the Northwest Tribes, p. 421.

⁴⁹ Spinden: Nez Percé, p. 249.

⁵⁰ Lowie: Crow Religion, p. 338.

social fiction as anywhere in North America. But assurance of success could come from a diametrically opposite reason. Among the California Maidu none ever failed if they undertook it; but here it was because the predisposition had to be manifest before the final step was taken.

In the second place this vision in North America was not a synonym for dreams. These had their part, and are frequently referred to, but they came to the fortunate son of a great shaman, or to the strong medicine man who had been already blessed by visions. In other words their character was ordinarily interpreted as auxiliary to the actual vision, and only to be appropriated by those whose supernatural powers were already acknowledged. The Pawnee conventionalized a definite correlation of dreams and visions. The dream was granted first, and if it was obeyed—by going to find or meet the spirit—the vision was granted.⁵¹ Among the Shasta and the Maidu, predisposition was manifested in dreams which were subsequently followed by the vision itself.⁵²

There are, besides, to be sure, local areas where, as we shall see later, the primary stress is laid on dreams as such, as among the Iroquois, and also at the opposite corner of the continent among the Mohave. But these exceptions tend only to emphasize by contrast the usual rule.

Any general identification with dreams is dispelled, further, by the Indian theories of vision inducement. They recognized, everywhere, so far as we know, the two types known to modern experiments in psychic phenomena—involuntary, and induced experiences. With the Indians, however, one or other of the two attitudes was stressed over enormous areas. East of the Rocky Mountains the emphasis is upon the sought vision induced by hunger, thirst, purgatives, and self-laceration. To the west of the Rockies, though we find there also the deliberate vision quest, a very widespread attitude regards the vision as

⁵¹ Dorsey: Pawnee, pp. 52, 86, 102, 123, 206, etc.

⁵² Dixon: Northern Maidu, p. 269; Shasta, p. 471 sq.

unsought, involuntary, a thing of predisposition. As among the Koryak of the Asiatic tundras, no one of his own free will can have the vision,⁵³ so among the Shasta, as we saw, it is predisposition that expresses itself in dreams, and among the Maidu of the Sacramento Valley the trance is sudden while hunting.⁵⁴ It may among the Tlingit be against the individual's will.⁵⁵ The Wintun may not refuse however inconvenient.⁵⁶ Among the Bella Coola it is impossible to obtain the art of shamanism by fasting and prayer; it is a free gift from the deity. A person who is to be a shaman will fall sick, and during his illness Snx will give him a song which must be kept a deep secret. After this he is able to cure diseases.⁵⁷ Among the Squalli, of Puget Sound, predisposition is the entire requirement.⁵⁸ On the Pit River of northern California, "nobody makes you a doctor, you just become one. The spirits choose you."⁵⁹

This distinction, while not absolute, is nevertheless significant in connection with certain attitudes which have been assumed to be characteristic of the guardian-spirit relationship. We have seen that in the area where the vision is considered primarily an inducible experience, the means employed are concentration, hunger, thirst, purgatives, and self-laceration. This self-laceration may be carried very far indeed as among the Mandan or Dakota or Cheyenne where the custom was to cut off finger-joints, or to insert skewers through the flesh and tie these to a pole from which the suppliant attempted to tear himself free. Or the fast might be prolonged beyond our ideas of endurance as among the Central Algonkian. In this region the phrase which described a supernatural experience was regularly "to be pitied by the spirits." The phrase had travelled beyond the

⁵³ Jochelson: *The Koryak*, pt I, p. 47.

⁵⁴ Dixon: *The Maidu*, p. 267.

⁵⁵ Krause: *Die Tlinkit-Indianer*, p. 284.

⁵⁶ Curtin: *Creation Myths of North America*, p. 516.

⁵⁷ Boas: *Third Report on Northwest Tribes*, p. 421.

⁵⁸ Haeberlin: MSS. Puget Sound.

⁵⁹ De Angulo: MSS. Pit River Indians.

region of self-laceration, as for instance among the Omaha, and was not present, for instance, among the Crow who, as we have seen, employed the torture. Nevertheless I think we may see here a characteristic of this combined vision-guardian-spirit concept which could be proved in a number of other particulars: that the means of inducing the experience—the vision—has, in the area where this concept of painful inducement is dominant, then been secondarily attached to the attitude of the guardian spirit. It is certainly noteworthy that whatever traces we find in North America of reverence toward the spirit protectors are in those areas where the concept of the vision itself requires a certain psychological attitude which may then with great ease be transferred to the guardian spirit.⁶⁰

I have spoken of the social recognition of the vision as the fundamental and typical religious fact of North America. This is true in two senses: (I) It is a more inclusive concept than the guardian spirit in areas where they are both found; and (II) it is found in areas and tribes where the guardian spirit has been reinterpreted out of existence in our common understanding of the term.

I. It is almost universally true that the vision is sought on other occasions than in procuring a guardian spirit. The occasions differ, of course. In California, where guardian spirits are conceived as the shaman's means of healing disease, the medicine man will seek a vision for every cure, sometimes a communication from his tutelary, sometimes such an experience as journeying to the lower world to find the sick man's soul. Among the Labrador Montagnais and Mistassini where the guardian spirit is conceived partly as a hunting talisman, the particularly lucky hunter will "get a vision" every night of the whereabouts of game.⁶¹ The Winnebago "fast for every war path,"⁶² with observances similar to those of the puberty fast.

⁶⁰ See for the opposite, formalistic attitude among the Nootka: Sapir, Vancouver Island Indians, in Hastings's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*.

⁶¹ Speck: *Game Totems*, pp. 16, 17.

⁶² Radin: *Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian*, p. 465.

Among the Haida, "cleanness"—rigid abstinence from food and drink and women, bathing in the sea, taking sweat-baths and emetics, "keeping run of the days," i.e., allowing stated intervals of observance—was employed for strength, property, tribal expeditions, and success generally, and might be followed by a vision.⁶³

It is on the Plains, however, that this tendency is carried furthest, so that all guardian-spirit phenomena, however large they bulk, are only a single particular manifestation of the much more pervading practice of the vision. It is true of all tribes of the Great Plains that the vision is sought on continually recurring occasions—for mourning, for war-paths, for revenge, for curing disease, or in consequence of a vow during illness, for a name for a child, for a design, for entrance into a society; and on all these occasions the seeker ordinarily receives his power or commands directly without specifically acquiring a guardian spirit.

The vision, in fact, in common interpretation for the greater part of the continent, was regularly in itself that which gave control of supernatural power. Though guardian spirits were an enormously common intermediate step, the logic of Indian thought did not require them. "He was a great dreamer and used to kill people with his power."⁶⁴ That is the essential connection between power—and it may be interpreted as power to kill, or strength, or wealth—and the vision as such. "I was going to be poor," the unsuccessful Crow explains his poverty, "that is why I had no vision."⁶⁵

Even when the reference is undoubtedly to the obtaining of a guardian spirit, the native idiom expresses rather the tribal practices that led to the vision, and passes immediately without the intermediate step of the guardian spirit to the subsequent power. The Tsimshian uncle urged his nephews: "I want

⁶³ Swanton: Haida, p. 40.

⁶⁴ Lowie: Assiniboine Traditions, p. 155.

⁶⁵ Lowie: Crow Religion, p. 323.

you to be stronger than anyone else; therefore build a large fire. Go down to the water and bathe in the sea. (It was winter.) Then I shall come down and whip you with a bundle of twigs.' . . . The three brothers went fasting all the time, and they became stronger than all the other people.'⁶⁶ Among the Fox the child was counseled, "Blacken your face, my child; life is hard. That is why I say to you, 'Blacken your face' " (i.e., fast).⁶⁷ The Winnebago taught the youths, "You ought to be of some help to your fellow men, and for that reason I counsel you to fast. Without any trouble you will be able to obtain the prize you desire."⁶⁸ This attenuated functional significance of the guardian spirit in native thought makes even more striking the immense area in which the concept was nevertheless retained in clean-cut fashion.

II. There are, however, not a few cases where the guardian spirit has been reinterpreted until it has no meaning in our common understanding of the term, and yet the vision experiences and the logic of the connection between them and "power" have been retained.

The vision formula of the Pawnee, for instance, makes a guardian-spirit description unintelligible, and yet leaves untouched the ordinary objective procedure, and the familiar sanctions obtained in the experience. Their shamans, for instance—as distinct from their priests—are initiated always in four or five definitely localized "animal lodges" where representatives of *all* the animals show them feats of legerdemain, and give them power. In other words, such a scene is the required form of vision for shamanistic initiation. But no one animal is selected as the individual's special tutelary.⁶⁹

The Dakota shaman's vision is a stereotyped affair involving four sets of actors and the metamorphosis of two of them—

⁶⁶ Boas: *Tsimshian Mythology*, p. 116.

⁶⁷ Michelson: *Sacred Owl Bundle*, p. 35.

⁶⁸ Radin: *Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian*, p. 450.

⁶⁹ Dorsey: *Skidi Pawnee*, p. xix; Wissler MSS; Dorsey: *Pawnee*, pp. 52, 241, 261, 279, etc.

one into animals, the other into plants. The essential ingredient of his "medicine" is the pulverized powder of the plant into which on a backward look he saw the persons giving him the medicine transformed.⁷⁰ It is however not the plant nor the elaborately garbed human beings of the vision who are his guardian spirits, but the animal which runs off when the instructor disappears. Here, while the guardian spirit is still retained, it is a purely arbitrary proceeding, and without a knowledge of widespread customs would be unintelligible.

In a different fashion a somewhat similar result had been brought about among the Central Algonkian. The Menomini and Ojibwa, for instance, laid as great stress upon the vision as any peoples of North America, but they aspired to such inclusive blessings that an individual guardian spirit was not evident. The Winnebago counseled their young men thus: "Not with the blessing of one spirit, not with the blessing of twenty spirits, can you go on the war-path. You shall be blessed by all the spirits there are on the earth, those that are pinned through the earth (the Earth-weights), and those underneath the earth; by all these, and by all those in the waters, and all those on the sides of the earth, (that is, the winds) all four of these; and by Disease-Giver, the sun; by the moon, the day, the earth," et cetera.⁷¹ An Ojibwa text reads:⁷² "Concerning all sorts of things did I dream—about what was everywhere on earth did I dream; about the sea, the suns, and the stars, and about all things in the circle of the heavens from which blow the winds did I dream. And about the manitou that was above, did I dream; by him was I spoken to, by him was I given the knowledge of what would happen to me. By all the people of the stars was I blest. It was then that I constantly dreamed of every sort of observance and of song; of the songs that are on high did I hear. By a great throng of sky people was I blest," et cetera.

⁷⁰ Wissler: *Oglala Societies*, p. 81.

⁷¹ Radin: *Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian*, p. 452.

⁷² Jones: *Ojibwa Texts*, vol. 2, p. 295.

A comparable reinterpretation of the guardian spirit, but along different lines, is found recurring in very far distant areas. In California the Mohave have no place at all in their tribal pattern for guardian spirits in the ordinary use of the term. What is revealed to them in their visions is a personal experience in mythic times before the creation of the world. The dreamer believes himself to have been present in spirit form at the original ceremonies or cures performed by Mastamho himself, and receives his power from this fact. The songs used in healing describe this instruction by Mastamho. All the myths and even the more historical legends of the tribe are supposed to be known to those who tell them, not because they have heard or learned them, but because they have seen the events themselves in their dreams.⁷³

Besides these few tribal patterns where, in the light of their more orthodox neighbors and their own objective practices, we may read with a fair degree of certainty the process by which the guardian-spirit formula has been lost, there are two other areas of wider extent where today the belief in the tutelary spirit is not found—the Iroquois, and the Southwest.

When Morgan wrote the “League of the Iroquois” in 1851, nothing in his careful knowledge of the tribe led him to mention any form of guardian-spirit belief. And after careful ethnographical work among the tribe today, “evidence as to the acquisition of guardian spirits is at present unsatisfactory.”⁷⁴ By unique accident, however, documentary evidence enables us to reconstruct the very period during which the guardian-spirit belief was reinterpreted out of existence. The Jesuit fathers, writing in 1642, could not be more explicit concerning the acquisition of tutelaries. “A certain man had, when but fifteen or sixteen years of age, retired to the woods to prepare himself by fasting for the appearance of some Demon. After

⁷³ Kroeber: Mohave, p. 280.

⁷⁴ Goldenweiser: Iroquois Work, p. 470.

having fasted sixteen days without eating anything, and drinking water only, he suddenly heard this utterance, that came from the Sky: 'Take care of this man and let him end his fast.' At the same time he saw an aged man of rare beauty who came down from the Sky, approached him, and looking kindly at him said: 'Have courage. I will take care of thy life. It is a fortunate thing for thee to have taken me for thy Master. None of the Demons who haunt these countries shall have any power to harm thee.' " His guardian promised him long life and offspring.⁷⁵

But even in the time of the Jesuit Fathers, the Iroquois had their own *Leitmotiv*, which differed from that of other peoples—the dream which it was obligatory to fulfil in real life. One of their chief divinities, Taronhiawagon, the first friend of the Iroquois, had a chief function as sender of dreams.⁷⁶ The Jesuit Fathers listed, as obstacles to Indian conversion, "Drunkenness, dreams and impurity." And, after they had described the other two, they continued, "The dream is an evil even more dangerous. It is the divinity of the savage. All that they dream must be carried out." And the length to which this principle was carried is vividly portrayed in the "Relations." At the one great regularly recurring tribal ceremony, the Festival of Dreams, pandemonium prevailed. "Some go armed with swords, bayonets, knives, hatchets or cudgels, and pretend to strike with these every one they meet; others carry firebrands, coals and ashes and scatter them about without caring on whom they fall; and all this continues until their dream is guessed and fulfilled. They will not leave the spot until their thought is divined and if one delays too long, or if one does not wish to divine it, or if one cannot, they threaten to burn up everything; which comes to pass only too often. It would be a cruelty and a sort of murder not to give a man what his dream called for, for the refusal might cause his death.

⁷⁵ Jesuit Relations, XXIII, p. 156, et seq.

⁷⁶ Hale: Book of Rites, p. 74.

Therefore they may see themselves stripped of their all without any hope of recompense.”⁷⁷

Dreams had also medicinal value and were used to effect a cure. “It frequently occurs, however, that a hot fever, by causing grotesque and senseless dreams, gives the poor medicine man much trouble.”⁷⁸

The whole complex of isolation, fasting, and prayer was employed in connection with these duly-to-be-fulfilled dreams as well as in connection with guardian spirits, and by the middle of the nineteenth century, when Morgan wrote, its usage in connection with dreams had obliterated that in connection with guardian spirits. The fulfilment of dreams played still its same old rôle. The celebrated chief; Cornplanter, resigned his chieftainship in consequence of a dream. During a New Year’s Festival of Dreams he went from house to house for three days, nearly naked in the cold as was the custom, seeking for some one to guess his dream. At last a Seneca interpreted it as the abandonment of his chieftainship, and Cornplanter immediately put it into execution. His presents which, as chief, he had received from Washington, Adams, and Jefferson, he collected and burned; his wampum belt and tomahawk he sent to his successor.⁷⁹

The “new religion” of Handsome Lake, which swept the Iroquois from the time of his revelation in 1800, had no doubt its influence in the abandonment of guardian spirits as a practice among the Iroquois, but Handsome Lake preached neither fasting nor tutelaries nor fulfilment of dreams; fasting and the puberty isolation have lasted down to the present day, however;⁸⁰ and Cornplanter’s fulfilment of his dream occurred ten years after the excitement of Handsome Lake’s ministry had begun. “Guessing the dream” was in Morgan’s time a

⁷⁷ Jesuit Relations, XLII, p. 154, et seq.

⁷⁸ Ibid, XLVII, p. 181.

⁷⁹ Morgan: League of the Iroquois, vol. I, p. 205 and note 1.

⁸⁰ Goldenweiser: Iroquois Work, p. 470.

main part of the tribal festival days. It is the guardian spirit concept alone that did not survive. The situation as we find it now among the Iroquois, may then be set down not primarily to the preaching of the great prophet, but to the local shift of emphasis, begun already before the Jesuit period, from tutelarities to the fulfilment of dreams in waking life.

The Southwest is the one great area of North America where guardian spirits have no dominant rôle in ceremonial or individual life; nor can we reconstruct a past history of them by documentary evidence. We are the better able, however, to infer the direction of the Southwest development from the less absolute cases which we have passed in review.

In the first place, the Southwest is not geographically an outpost beyond the reach of the guardian-spirit concept. It is known in its most orthodox form among the Indians of Central America where it was described as early as 1530.

The Devil deluded them, appearing in the shape of a lion, or a tiger, or a coyote, a beast like a wolf, or in the shape of an alligator, a snake, or a bird, which they called *naguales*, signifying keepers or guardians, and when the bird died, the Indian who was in league with him died also, which often happened and was looked upon as infallible. The manner of contracting this alliance was thus: the Indian repaired to the river, wood, hill, or most obscure place, where he called upon the devils by such names as he thought fit, talked to the rivers, rocks or woods, said he went to weep that he might have the same his predecessors had, carrying a cock or dog to sacrifice. In that melancholy fit he fell asleep, and either in a dream or waking, saw some one of the aforesaid birds or other creatures, whom he entreated to grant him profit in salt, cacao, or any other commodity, drawing blood from his own tongue, ears, and other parts of his body, making his contract at the same time with the said creature, the which, either in a dream or waking, told him, "Such a day, you shall go abroad a-sporting, and I will be the first bird or other animal you shall meet, and will be your *nagual* and companion at all times." Whereupon such friendship was contracted between them, that when one of them died, the other did not survive, and they fancied that he who had no *nagual* could not be rich.⁸¹

This very familiar usage was modified among the Mexican Chiapanecs, according to Bishop Nuñez de le Vega, who wrote

⁸¹ De Herrera: General History, vol. 4, p. 138 et seq.

toward the end of the seventeenth century, by their dependence upon the zodiac. The *nagual* of each child was cast by means of his horoscope at birth. "These writings are known as Repertories, or Calendars, and they are also used to discover articles lost or stolen, and to effect cures of diseases."⁸² Among the Aztecs these tutelaries, assigned according to the horoscope, were known as "tonalli."⁸³

The Pueblo area is, then, surrounded on the south as well as the north by recognizable guardian-spirit concepts. But the contrast which the Southwest forms to other regions in this respect is sufficiently striking. Here tutelaries and the acquisition of tutelaries play by no means the dominant rôle in religious practices that is so marked elsewhere. These peoples have a ceremonialism probably more elaborate and important in tribal life than that in any other area of North America, but it is dominated by the idea of the necessity of group-ceremonial approach to the gods, not of that of individual experience.

Nevertheless it seems sometimes as if every element of the familiar guardian-spirit complex is present in the Southwest except the standardization of the guardian spirit itself. These elements include especially: (1) the attitude toward dreams; (2) the practices which in other areas are used for vision inducement and are here practised for ceremonial cleanness; (3) involuntary vision or peculiar psychic experience, with intimacy with some animal or man-being, and the power resulting from it; and finally (4) sought visions.

(1) Dreams are regarded as setting up serious responsibilities of a ceremonial sort. In Zuñi, a man dreamed not long ago that he had offered to entertain certain masked impersonations of supernatural beings. He did not carry out his dream purpose, and he was consequently hurt in a wagon accident.⁸⁴

⁸² Quoted by Brinton, *Nagualism*, p. 24, et seq.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 19, et seq.

⁸⁴ Parsons: *Notes on Zuñi*, pt. II, p. 283.

Dreams are also recognized as entailing initiation into the various curing societies. This was true, for instance, at Sia,⁸⁵ and in Zuñi a man still lives who was initiated into his society because his dog spoke to him while out sheep-herding.⁸⁶

(2) Another familiar element of the widespread vision-guardian-spirit complex which is found also in the Southwest is concerned with the means employed for the inducement of visions; though here, according to the Southwest pattern, no vision is expected to follow, and the purification is itself efficacious. Ceremonial cleanness is everywhere in the Southwest a very conspicuous concept, and is attained by fasting and isolation; continence; the emetic (so prominent also in the Southeast); and the ceremonial head-washing with yucca suds. The Navaho and Apache use also the sweat-house, and induce vomiting. This cleanness is prerequisite to all ceremonies. At the head of the ceremonial organization of the Zuñi and the Sia and elsewhere is a group of "high priests" devoted to lives of fasting and prayer. At Sia, on important occasions, the head-priest abstains entirely from food for four days and receives directions from the gods, for whom he acts as a mouthpiece.⁸⁷ At Cochiti, the cacique at the head of the ceremonial organization has to pray and fast for the whole world, even for the whites.⁸⁸

(3) Practically every collection of Pueblo traditions which we possess has myths dealing in quite orthodox Indian fashion with extraordinary psychic experience, and the power and blessing derived from it. Cushing in "Zuñi Breadstuffs"⁸⁹ has recorded a Zuñi myth of the orphan bungler who was adopted by the coyote when out hunting. All the usual elements of the story are present: the introduction of the boy in Coyote's house; his instructions as to ceremonialism, hunting, etc.;

⁸⁵ Stevenson: Sia, p. 74.

⁸⁶ Parsons: MSS.

⁸⁷ Goddard: Handbook, p. 101.

⁸⁸ Dumarest: Notes on Cochiti, p. 197.

⁸⁹ Pp. 401-515.

Coyote's appearance as a man during the interview; the offerings which the boy makes in return; the great success which comes to him through the experience and the instructions, and the life-long blessing and protection which is granted him.

A variant of the deserted-children story describes a similar experience of the boy hunter, first with Rabbit, and later with Wolf. This last protector so fills the houses with corn that the doors will no longer open.⁹⁰ An Isleta tale describes the adoption of the hero by Deer,⁹¹ and the story has been recorded also from the Tewa of the First Mesa.⁹²

Similar experiences occur also outside of traditions, within recent times. In Cochiti a man of the last generation was sick for a whole year, and was taken through the land of the dead, which he described on "awaking" in great detail.⁹³ Among the Pima a shaman decided upon his profession because he dreamed every night that he was visited by someone who endowed him with magic power. When he began to practise, after a novitiate of three or four years, his success depended upon the strength of his dreams and visions. His highly-prized transparent crystals which he kept in a "nest" in his body, came to him by means of a set vision. When out alone, he saw a man approaching who always vanished before reaching him. The prospective shaman searched the place of his disappearance and found one of these crystals.⁹⁴

(4) The records of sought visions are, however, the most striking proof of elements in this religious complex which are common to the Southwest, and to the rest of the continent. In mythology there is one quite remarkable passage from the Pima.⁹⁵

I was lying in ashes and praying the distant mountains for strength, and the far doctors for power. . . And I asked the Butcher Bird for

⁹⁰ Parsons: Notes on Zuñi, II, p. 316, sq.

⁹¹ Lummis: Pueblo Indian Folk-stories, pp. 12-14.

⁹² Parsons: MSS.

⁹³ Boas: MSS.

⁹⁴ Russell: Pima, pp. 257-259.

⁹⁵ Lloyd: Mythology of the Pima, p. 202, sq.

power, and he followed his Road of Light and touched the ground four times with his tail and came to me. And my enemy thought himself a good dreamer, and that his dreams were fulfilled for good, and that he had a good bow with a good string, and good cane arrows, but the Butcher Bird had already punched his eyes out without his knowing it.

A Laguna text describes the visit of a group of boys to the haunt of a certain sort of spirits. They slept on the top of the mesa. Before dawn the spirits came. "All different kinds went there. Some carried ice in their hands, and others carried cactus flowers, and others carried yucca in baskets, and also they exercised much magic power. Before them we sacrificed pollen and we asked for everything to the end: plants (success in agriculture), and for growth, and old age, and for plant seeds." As it became daylight most of the spirits disappeared, but the rest came to the west toward the boys, and put seeds of different kinds into their hands. "Thus I saw them nearby. Some looked as though they had clouds on their heads; others looked like birds, and they spoke. Thus I saw the k'o.'-pi.ct'ay'a."⁹⁶

It is from Cochiti that we have abundance of evidence of the sought vision in the Southwest as an element of contemporary religious practice.⁹⁷ "Men would go out and fast for four days and four nights. They prayed and sang. If they fasted properly they would see a bear, or a mountain lion, coyote, wolf or eagle, who would come to them and say, 'I will help you hunt and catch deer.' " A bear or lion would appear to the would-be hunter; a person to the gambler; and to the shaman, a wolf or eagle. One hunter met a bear in a deep canyon; he talked to him, promised him friendship, and specific help in hunting deer. The man knew all the time that the bear was really a (supernatural) person only wearing a bearskin.

There are also in Cochiti persons who obtained power by visiting certain places at midnight with offerings. The suppliant hears terrific noises, and perhaps he feels that he is

⁹⁶ Boas: MSS, Laguna Texts.

⁹⁷ Boas: MSS, Cochiti.

being pulled backward by unseen spirits. But, if he does not look back, and goes out slowly, he will be a brave warrior and a successful hunter.

Women, too, before making baskets, had to fast for four days and take emetics. After that a woman would appear to them who helped them in making baskets.⁹⁸

There are present then in the Southwest most of the elements that we have seen to be associated with the vision-guardian-spirit complex over the rest of the continent. It is the guardian spirit itself that is lacking as an institutionalized element of religion. Under the influence of the concept of group-ceremonial as the proper way of approaching the gods, who here took more and more definite form, individual experience as a means to this end became less and less important, though we are not without evidence that it is present still.

There is then no guarantee of permanency in the oldest and most intimately linked of cultural complexes.⁹⁹ Among the Iroquois the vision-guardian-spirit concept has acquired a new direction on the one side, and in the Southwest has dwindled in contrast with another dominant concept. In both, interest has been withdrawn from the old orthodox trait of the acquiring of a tutelary, and this new focus of interest has become the center of new actions and new beliefs. It is the process by which all cultural concepts are ceaselessly and indefinitely changing.

The vision and not the guardian spirit, then, is the unifying religious fact of North America, and their association is a fact of enormously wide distribution and very varying tribal interpretations. Their interpenetration is called for neither by the character of the experience nor by that of the guardian spirit, but is an historical juxtaposition which has crossed the continent along with the ceremonial head-scratcher and the sweat-house.

⁹⁸ Boas: MSS, Cochiti.

⁹⁹ See below: p. 62.

Formalization. It is obvious from the facts we have noticed that the vision is generally regarded as an experience of the individual in isolation from his fellows. This is almost universally true, but it by no means follows that either the means of inducing the vision or the revealed contents of it are born out of individual consciousness. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just as the "revealed" contents of supernatural experiences everywhere are cast in definite cultural patterns, so preëminently among the Indians. The dream that the Dakota required for their shamans is sufficiently striking as a type of these set patterns (see p. 30, above). The same tribe had also a conventionalized vision which was required for berdaches, who were regarded as sacred and not exactly normal.¹⁰⁰ There are also societies of great importance which are entered through a vision of fixed type—an extremely widespread phenomenon which is well developed also among the Iroquois.¹⁰¹

The Tlingit required for their shamans a vision of a fish-otter sticking out his tongue to be cut off for the benefit of the candidate;¹⁰² and, though there were other possible preliminaries to shamanistic initiation, this particular vision was of constant recurrence. The Penobscot, as we saw, strokes the head of a serpent to bind it to him as a servant. The Shasta sees an Axeki, a little man with bow and arrow. And so on indefinitely. It may well be doubted whether in any tribe a dream would be necessarily rejected because it did not conform to a rigid patterning, if other circumstances were favorable. It is nevertheless true that suggestion as to the type of dream valued in that community is everywhere present, and so moulds the recorded dreams that there would be little difficulty in placing any vision-text from any part of North America within at most a group of three or four neighboring tribes. Even the most individualistic of the visions blurs but slightly the tribal outline.

¹⁰⁰ Wissler: *Societies of the Oglala*, p. 92.

¹⁰¹ Hewitt: in *Handbook of American Indians*.

¹⁰² Krause: *Die Tlinkit-Indianer*, p. 285.

This formalization of content is paralleled by the formalization of the means of obtaining the vision. For the Blackfoot the desideratum was intense concentration; "keep thinking it intensely all the time" was the formula of success.¹⁰³ On Puget Sound, on the contrary, the best condition of obtaining it is to go out on the mountains in winter, and after certain rites, "lie down and sleep soundly."¹⁰⁴ "Cleanness" was the great requirement on the Northwest Coast, which took the form of rubbing with spruce needles or plunging into icy streams; on the Eastern Plains the tearing out of thongs inserted in the flesh; in the Southeast, purgatives and scarification with sharp-toothed combs; "blackening the face," west and south of the Great Lakes. Each of these, and many more localized ones, has each a definite geographical distribution. Any one of them may become the foremost consideration in the native mind. Among the Winnebago, for instance, the crucial point is blackening the face with charcoal: "they would conceivably have tolerated variations in the attitude of mind required, but would never have permitted the omission of blackening the face. According to a well-known prophecy among them, the world will come to an end when the Winnebago fast with 'white,' i.e., unblackened faces."¹⁰⁵

These institutionalized means of vision-inducement were always more inclusive than their use in connection with the vision itself. Usually the local practices of this sort were also those which were used to produce ceremonial cleanness in general. Thus we find that the fastings, or the divings into frozen streams, or the like, are efficacious in themselves also, without any question of whether or not a vision occurs. Among the Kwakiutl, a child, in their mythological stories, by staying in the ice-cold spring the whole day for long periods, becomes so strong that he can twist yew trees without difficulty.¹⁰⁶ A

¹⁰³ Wissler: *Blackfoot Bundles*, p. 253.

¹⁰⁴ Haeberlin: MSS.

¹⁰⁵ Radin: *Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian*, p. 451, note 214.

¹⁰⁶ Boas: *Kwakiutl Texts*, p. 140.

boy of the Upper Chinook must chop a hole in the ice and dive five times "in order to be strong; or, just so, in order to prepare one for a guardian spirit. And indeed, ever since I was a child, I have never been sick; I have always been strong. But not at all have I seen anything that they call a guardian spirit. I do not know what it is like."¹⁰⁷ In this case an identical exploit was required of any boy who fell asleep during the telling of a myth in winter.

The vision-complex, then, formalized into definite tribal patterns as to content and means of inducement, is enormously the largest and most basic concept of Indian religion. In several widely scattered areas, by very different processes, the guardian-spirit formulation of the vision experience has been reinterpreted out of existence in any ordinary sense. Even where the guardian-spirit formulation is fundamental, the vision is sought also on many occasions of life without a guardian-spirit intermediary. This fact—that we have here as the universally socially recognized fact, not a dogma nor secondary explanation, but an experience in which validity was recognized by the presence of the "religious thrill" itself—makes this area particularly suggestive. In so clear-cut a case, does not this basis itself necessitate some psychological unity in the observed phenomena? Has not the religious experience itself its corollary in belief and practice?

III. BEHAVIOR OF THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT CONCEPT IN RELATION TO OTHER CULTURAL TRAITS

1. *Kinds of Spirits.* In the first place, then, is it not reasonable to suppose that a certain unity of type should be found in the tutelary spirits themselves? As a matter of fact, Wundt has proposed this very aspect of the guardian-spirit complex as its common basis. He argues that in the development of the concept of the guardian spirit there comes into existence that veneration of spiritual beings which, having

¹⁰⁷ Sapir: *Wishram Texts*, p. 189.

previously in the stage of demoniacal beliefs been non-existent, now prepares the way for a worship of the gods.¹⁰⁸ Guardian-spirit beliefs, to him, are a stage in an evolutionary series of the type of spirit worshipped. The question at issue, therefore, is whether we do actually find any such demarcation of the kinds of guardian spirits recognized; a limited sort, that is, that may be classified as tutelary, and set off against evil demons on the one hand, and gods on the other.

As we have already seen, however, there is a wide range. The guardian spirits of the Kwakiutl, for instance, are not to be distinguished from "gods"; they have their personal names, their legendary characteristics, their life histories; they constitute a loose tribal pantheon, and each one has in his gift his own particular symbol of superhuman magic. These god-personalities are characteristic for the whole Northwest, though the pantheons have always tribal individuality.

At the other extreme we find tutelaries which are indeed guardian spirits possessed in the same manner as any others, yet assuming all the characteristics of Wundt's "demons of a lower animism." The Takelma of southern Oregon possessed guardian spirits of this sort as one of their most pronounced religious notions.¹⁰⁹ The tutelaries of the goyó, the most powerful class of shamans, were all of this character. No novice was free to choose his vision, and whatever spirit presented itself must be accepted. Possession of these goyó spirits meant, if it were the Sun, the death of all the shaman's children; it meant in every case the distrust and fear of the entire community. Those possessing these spirits were liable to death without retaliation or payment of blood fee. That is, possessors of this type of guardian spirit were looked upon exactly as are the practitioners of black arts among Wundt's demon worshippers.

Among the Central Algonkian, certain of the regular mythological beings who appear as guardian spirits are similar tokens

¹⁰⁸ Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie*, vol. iv, *Mythus und Religion*, pt. i, p. 555.

¹⁰⁹ Sapir: *Religious Ideas of the Takelma Indians*, p. 41 sq.

of black magic. A Menomini youth "fasted and prayed for a prophetic dream. In spite of all his endeavors to obtain the aid of the good manitous, Misikinubick, the black horned, hairy snake persistently appeared to him, offering him the powers of sorcery, until, at last, the lad was obliged to accept his tender." He was required to wait until he was forty to make use of his powers and to pay for it at that time by the sacrifice of two daughters, whom he drowned. From that time on, he was able to cripple, ruin, or kill his enemies by the help of his tutelary.¹¹⁰

Similar practices are known for the Winnebago, Sauk, Fox, and Potawatomi;¹¹¹ and they are probably very close to those of the Iroquois and their allied tribes.¹¹²

Throughout the whole Wabanaki area, the literal translation in all dialects of the native word for guardian spirit is "that by which magic is performed."¹¹³ Aside from tricks—which also partook of the "black magic" character—his occupations were "to kill or injure by pointing the finger, to prove his strength over rivals, either in combat or contest, to spy on enemies, to spoil the luck of trappers and hunters," and so on.¹¹⁴

It is quite usual, therefore, to find the guardian spirit as a typical demon of black magic; and at the other extreme, on the Northwest Coast, tutelaries are well-nigh indistinguishable from gods.

Wundt would, of course, consider it possible to reconcile these facts with his position, since he could suppose that in the one case a previous attitude has survived into a new stage, and in the other a future attitude is foreshadowed before the old stage is abandoned. Such a reconciliation is, however, too hypothetical to be admitted. It rests on the evolutionist's claim of parallel and uniform development for all cultures,

¹¹⁰ Skinner: *Menomini Associations and Ceremonials*, p. 185.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, page 171.

¹¹² Morgan: *League of the Iroquois*, I, p. 156.

¹¹³ Speck: *Game Totems*, p. 15.

¹¹⁴ Speck: *Penobscot Shamanism*, p. 256.

and can be sustained only by an investigation of concrete historic processes. Until it is so sustained it cannot be used in theoretic interpretations. We may therefore take these facts at their face value, and see no more and no less correlation of the guardian-spirit idea with the demons of black magic than with the gods or with animal spirits.

Aside from Wundt's untenable suggestion, however, may we not discover some other aspect of the tutelary beings themselves that we may regard as fundamental? Dr. Radin has found this unity in their development out of the *genii loci*. "Very little was necessary to accomplish the transformation of the *genii loci* into the guardian spirit. The idea of guardian and protector of the precinct as such had but to be extended so as to include all those who lived in that precinct, both individually and collectively."¹¹⁵ On the contrary, I am inclined to think that one of the most striking facts in this connection is the distinction which the Indian maintained between his two great animistic preoccupations, the guardian spirit and the *genii loci*. Where amalgamation took place, as Dr. Radin has recorded that it did among the Central Algonkian, it seems to have been under the strong double influence of a special social organization with considerable permanence in certain localities, and definite family instruction as to the contents of the vision. Such conditions, which actually exist among the Central Algonkian, might bring about this transfer from a *genius loci* to a guardian spirit; but it is a long and circuitous method. Certainly on the Plains it is exceedingly unusual for a tutelary to be recorded as having any place of residence, and even then the local-divinity idea is not added. In the Southeast, guardian spirits belonged to animate beings; it was foreign to native thought to conceive of them as presiding over places. On the Plateau they were grouped on very subordinate terms with canoes, triggers, the moon, thunder, garments, fish nets, and animals; the pattern here recognized

¹¹⁵ Radin: *Religion of the North American Indians*, p. 294.

no limits to possible guardian spirits, and hence occasionally accepted a local being. On the Pacific Coast we find the most luxuriant development of local spirits, but the Kwakiutl tutelaries resemble anything rather than *genii loci*, and where, as among the Haida, Ocean People and Forest People may be guardian spirits, they are on equal terms with Property Woman, the Two Singers, and the Canoe People.¹¹⁶ The only center where guardian spirits and *genii loci* were assimilated the one to the other, was in northwestern California and among the neighboring Maidu and Shasta. It is a particular local development, emphasizing by its exception the rule which in other areas kept the two kinds of spirits distinct. With the Maidu, animals are also seen in the vision, but mountains, rocks, and lakes are more usual.¹¹⁷ The old shaman who prepares the novice prays, and names all places in the whole region where spirits are known to him. Among the Yana, the shaman calls on rocks, logs, and trees for his power. "I am the . . . medicine-man," a text reads, "I go to every spring and am answered."¹¹⁸ The guardian spirit in the Shasta vision always tells where he lives; every rock, lake, or mountain has such a resident. But besides this local-spirit characterization, the guardian has also a folkloristic one, being a little man with bow and arrows who gives a sharpened crystal "pain,"¹¹⁹ and, in other tribes of the area, the "pain" itself became the guardian spirit.¹²⁰

Another cycle of animistic ideas, which was only locally and incompletely taken up into the guardian-spirit practices, is that concerned with ghosts and ancestral peoples. In North America the idea that one may seek tutelaries among the dead is very nearly absent. It is localized on the Pacific Coast, and as far inland as the Thompson River. The dead

¹¹⁶ Swanton: *The Haida*, pp. 38 and 29 sq.

¹¹⁷ Dixon: *Northern Maidu*, p. 277.

¹¹⁸ Sapir: *Yana Texts*, pp. 179, 180.

¹¹⁹ Dixon: *Shasta*, p. 473.

¹²⁰ Kroeber: *California Culture Provinces*, p. 161.

even here are never the source of the majority of guardian spirits, but shamans, especially, may have such. That is, they are regarded as unusual and awful tutelaries. The Tlingit shaman may spend days and nights in a grave seeking to obtain the spirit of the buried man as his tutelary.¹²¹ The Lillooet shaman may also seek a ghost as guardian,¹²² and the Thompson may place the skull of a powerful shaman before his sweat-house door, calling upon the deceased to become his spirit.¹²³

The concept of the dead as playing an active part in the lives of the living takes also other forms in this area; the idea of rebirth, for instance, is present among the Tlingit,¹²⁴ and among the Kwakiutl¹²⁵ and their neighbors. Among the Thompson¹²⁶ and Lillooet¹²⁷ it becomes weakened to the notion of the rebirth from the same mother of children dying in infancy. The connection, however, between the dead as guardian spirits and as playing other rôles in human life is not a constant one; in central California where the concern with the dead, in mourning ceremonies, in defilement taboos, and in emotional attitudes is dominant, there are, so far as we know, no guardian spirits among the dead. Their relative prominence on the Northwest Coast is, therefore, a local development, not necessarily conditioned by the cultural setting.

Animals were the most commonly obtained tutelaries, but the interpretation, even in this case, differed widely. A very widespread Indian theory, accentuated especially among the Central Algonkian, held that the guardian was never one of the animals of daily life, but an ancestral prototype of his species.¹²⁸ This theory had important practical consequences;

¹²¹ Krause: *Die Tlinkit-Indianer*, p. 285.

¹²² Teit: *Lillooet*, p. 287.

¹²³ Teit: *Thompson*, p. 354.

¹²⁴ Swanton: *Tlingit*, p. 463.

¹²⁵ Boas: *Fifth Report on Northwest Tribes*, p. 611.

¹²⁶ Teit: *Thompson*, p. 359.

¹²⁷ Teit: *Lillooet*, p. 287.

¹²⁸ Radin: *Religion among the North American Indians*, p. 283.

it nullified neighboring taboos against eating the flesh of one's guardian spirit. The reverence, in the Central Algonkian idea, was due to the prototype, not to the animals in the flesh. As we shall see later also, the interpretation of animal guardians varied as it was influenced in various ways in different totemic cycles of ideas.

The tutelary beings of North America, therefore, range from those of demoniacal sort to those indistinguishable from gods. They are, over most of North America, kept distinct from local spirits and from the dead, but in each case relatively strong connections are locally developed. Among all the Wabanaki tribes, as we have seen, they are disguises to be assumed in working magic; and in many cases, it goes almost without saying, they may be also fetishes pure and simple. A strong development in this direction has taken place especially among the Nootka of Vancouver Island, where the supernatural being bestows power not so much by way of a dream as by the amuletic virtue of his own body.¹²⁹ It is impossible, therefore, to group the guardian spirits of North America under any one type, or to see any one concept behind them.

2. *Puberty Ordeal*. Another sort of unity in the vision-guardian-spirit complex has been proposed, most explicitly by Hutton Webster. In his discussion of *Primitive Secret Societies* he states that the vision has thus become among the American Indians "the regular puberty ordeal."¹³⁰ There is a great deal that points to this identification. A large number of the earlier objective descriptions offered no other clue; and there are besides considerable areas where the two are conspicuously identified. It is helpful here to use Van Gennep's distinction between physical and social puberty,¹³¹ thus greatly increasing the range of years in which puberty ceremonies may occur. In this way we may be able to include the Plateau,

¹²⁹ Sapir: Vancouver Island Indians, p. 594.

¹³⁰ P. 153.

¹³¹ Van Gennep, Rites de Passage, p. 94.

the eastern seaboard in general, and the Central Algonkian where fasting was supposed to begin at ten¹³² and is recorded for five years of age.¹³³

It is also possible to regard the rites as primarily puberty ceremonials in those areas where they are undertaken only by shamans, if they are inaugurated at the time of adolescence; but it is impossible to explain them in these cases only by the puberty-ordeal idea. The two ideas are sometimes held clearly apart in the same tribe—the vision cycle leading to supernatural power, and the puberty cycle qualifying for membership in the tribe or for general success in life. Among the Takelma, for instance, the two were entirely distinct as far as the women of the tribe were concerned. Both sexes had the vision experience and were therefore shamans; but the menstrual dance was held also regularly for all girls of the tribe at adolescence.

In all California, indeed, the two concepts are remarkably distinct. The vision is so regularly an exclusive prerogative of the medicine man that here Dr. Kroeber can even define shamanism as “the supposed individual control of the supernatural through a personally acquired power of communication with the spiritual world”¹³⁴—a definition which is exactly descriptive of the vision experiences of other areas. Yet this is precisely the region where adolescent ceremonials for boys and girls are most prominently developed. The modern toloache cult of the Mission Indians has brought the vision experience into the boys’ puberty ceremonial but not into the girls’.¹³⁵

If the explanation of the vision experience as a puberty rite is insufficient in regions where the vision is expected only of the shaman, it is quite out of place in regions where mature men seek the vision. This is clearly the habit of the Crow, but more than that, it is the pattern for the Plains in general,¹³⁶

¹³² Radin: *Ojibwa Religion*, p. 7.

¹³³ Jones: *Ojibwa Texts*, II, p. 303.

¹³⁴ Kroeber: *Religion of California Indians*, p. 327.

¹³⁵ Waterman: *Diegeño, Indians*, p. 296; Du Bois: *Luiseno*, p. 177.

¹³⁶ Benedict: *Vision in Plains Culture*, p. 2.

except for their eastern fringe where Algonkian influence is strong. It is interesting that the same disassociation of vision and puberty occurs again on Puget Sound where it is the custom to obtain the vision after marriage.¹³⁷

There are other disturbing factors even in areas where the apparent connection is close. Among the Kwakiutl there were the following considerations: the right to the dance given by the guardian spirit must have been acquired by marriage or by killing the owner; money must be in readiness "to pay for his ecstasy"; and the elders must have given their approval to such acquisition. The death of a relative was also necessary in certain cases. Under such circumstances Schurtz is hardly justified in his identification of the Northwest Secret Societies with the youths' initiations of other regions, "die eben nichts weiter sind als umgestaltete und umgedeutete Bräuche dieser Art."¹³⁸

3. *Degree of Socialization.* No aspect of religious traits has been recognized as having so great a bearing upon their interpretation as this of the degree of socialization that underlies them. Durkheim, especially, has argued that the excitement of large tribal undertakings is the basis of the religious dichotomy into sacred and profane.¹³⁹ At their face value the facts of the Indian vision-guardian-spirit complex are obviously hard to reconcile with such a position. No one characteristic is more stable for the whole continent than the removal for this experience of this very fact of crowd excitement. The trait is constant in all the tribes whose guardian-spirit experiences we have passed in review. We know that the Indians did employ the crowd situation to induce psychic manifestations, as for instance, very conspicuously in the Ghost Dance practices.¹⁴⁰ In the vision that gave knowledge of the guardian

¹³⁷ Haeberlin: MSS on Puget Sound.

¹³⁸ Schurtz: Altersklassen und Männerbünde, p. 392.

¹³⁹ Durkheim: *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Durkheim argues that these guardian spirit observances as we know them now are a late development which are based on an original totemism. But see section below, p. 62.

¹⁴⁰ Mooney: *The Ghost Dance*.

spirit, however, there seems to be only one small corner of North America where a group setting was admitted. It has been recorded for two tribes of central California, the Wintun¹⁴¹ and the neighboring Wailaki.¹⁴² Among the Wintun the doctors and chiefs gave out word that on a certain night they were about to create doctors. All candidates were "sucked pure," and put through the sweat bathing. Then all gathered, and the sweat house was closed, and the lights extinguished. The spirits came with a whistling noise and one by one those into whom they entered fell down in a trance. The doctors called "One more! One more!" Excitement grew more intense. Some who had been possessed tried to reach the house roof; some tried to climb the center pole. The ceremony continued all night; many doctors might be made, or few, or none. There were always many people in the sweat house to whom spirits would not come.

Among the neighboring Wailaki, as many as twenty take their training together under the tutelage of two supervising shamans. They dance night and day to the accompaniment of songs—days in the mountain, nights back by the river. At the culminating ritual all sit in a circle, arms raised and bent forward, "like a tipi," swaying and singing. The old shamans rock them. As the spirit enters them, one after another they fall forward and are passed over to their wives or mothers to be tended. The test of success is blood in the mouth. Only five or six of the twenty are recognized as successful, and thereby become shamans.

Apparent similarities in other areas turn out to be of another order. Thus the Tsimshian, and the Kwakiutl as well, give guardians to the chiefs' sons and daughters in all night "throwing dances" at the potlatches,¹⁴³ but here the custom is an indication not of the use of a crowd situation to heighten an

¹⁴¹ Curtin: *Creation Myths of North America*, p. 512.

¹⁴² Goddard: MSS.

¹⁴³ Boas: *Tsimshian Society*, p. 515.

emotional state which would lead to vision experiences; rather here the vision cycle has become so weak that there is substituted the widespread potlatch custom, which in other more usual cases involved the gift of blankets rather than of tute-laries.

The Penobscot were accustomed to join together at irregular intervals in a "dark lodge" to conjure, and to find out whether any present were to become shamans.¹⁴⁴ But they met to perform tricks; that is, legerdemain was a function of a shaman, and any one excelling in it was presumably therefore destined to be a medicine man. The assembly had nothing to do with bringing about a mental state.

The point is made even more striking when this accepted pattern—that the guardian spirits revealed themselves in isolation—maintained itself even when the revelations were conceived as integral parts of great tribal ceremonies. Thus, on the Plains, visions were the more or less regular climax of the Sun Dance, but among the Dakota¹⁴⁵ or the Blackfoot¹⁴⁶ the participator went out alone on the prairie after the ceremony was over and the vision was granted in isolation, even five or six months later.

If it is distinctly irregular to obtain the guardian spirit in group ceremonial, it is, on the contrary, very common to find some manner of group rites built upon or around it. The common basis of all such group elaboration was the constant tendency of the guardian-spirit concept to enter into some sort of combination with some social grouping. This tendency existed even where no group rites had developed. We have seen how with the Thompson the professional grouping was stressed; with the Penobscot it entered into relation with their family groups, with their distinctive hunting territories. In California especially, and also in other areas, it was, as it were, synonymous with the shamanistic calling.

¹⁴⁴ Speck: *Penobscot Shamanism*, p. 245.

¹⁴⁵ Walker: *Sun Dance of the Oglala*, p. 120.

¹⁴⁶ Wissler: *Blackfoot Sun Dance*, p. 263.

The guardian-spirit experience likewise gave rise to social groupings entirely its own, which might develop any known degree of elaboration, and be, in turn, influenced in almost any known way by the kinship organization of the tribe. The simplest grouping according to guardian spirits occurs repeatedly, as in the animal-in-the-body dances of the Crow.¹⁴⁷ The guardian spirit was often conceived on the Plains as inhabiting the body of its possessor, and, in this dance, all those individuals who had bears, eagles, horses, and the like in their bodies would come together and display the supernatural presence within them in such a way that the animal was made to protrude part of its body through the performer's mouth.

Similar occasions where dances are organized around the guardian-spirit experience without forming any permanent organized grouping are common also on the Plateau,¹⁴⁸ and on the Atlantic coast. The great tribal ceremony of the Lenape,¹⁴⁹ who originally inhabited the coast between Connecticut and Maryland, was based on guardian spirits in this way. After the solemn opening of the ceremonial, the assembled tribe "passed the Turtle" from hand to hand, and when he received it, each man who had had a vision, might rise and dance, singing his guardian spirit's song or a description of his experience. This is taken up by the chorus, and the whole night is spent in recital. The twelfth and last night of the ceremony is reserved for women's visions.

Among the Dakota¹⁵⁰ and the Omaha¹⁵¹ a permanent grouping had taken the place of this loose but recurring dance demonstration. The societies had developed leaders, paraphernalia, traditions, and esoteric interpretations.

¹⁴⁷ Lowie: *Societies of the Crow*, p. 150.

¹⁴⁸ Spinden: *Nez Percé*, p. 249.

¹⁴⁹ Harrington: *Lenape Religion*, p. 92 sq.

¹⁵⁰ Wissler: *Oglala Societies*, p. 81 sq.

¹⁵¹ J. O. Dorsey: *Siouan Sociology*, p. 346 sq.

We have already seen how the Kwakiutl knit the guardian-spirit concept both to the clan organization and to their secret societies. These secret societies, which during the winter formed the basis of social organization for the tribe, had exactly the same unifying principle as the Dakota and Omaha cults—they were groups of those to whom the same supernatural patron had appeared. And although here the freedom of this “appearance” was strictly limited by rules of inheritance, and a fabulous elaboration of ritual and organization had taken place, the root idea is still familiar. The vision basis is, however, far more of a conventionalized formula, a social fiction, and this tendency may be carried to its logical conclusion in the initiation of an infant in arms into its hereditary society.¹⁵² Among the neighboring Tsimshian, the father may have the new-born child initiated by proxy at birth into a proper secret society, that it may be from infancy a member of the aristocracy, i.e., the initiated.¹⁵³ Here the social organization is everything; the guardian-spirit theory upon which it is based, a mere survival.

This organization of those having a common supernatural patron into secret societies more or less permanent and standardized in the tribe, by no means exhausts the possibility of connections between the social grouping and the guardian-spirit concept. It passes readily into social groups through the mechanism of inheritance. In one of its weaker forms we have noted it among the Shasta; in its strongest, among the Kwakiutl; but it has a very much wider distribution. The commonest basic idea seems to be that one attains a guardian that has already appeared in the family more readily than any other, but that one did not therefore know how to make any very extended use of it, if at all, without an individual revelation. Thus among the Ojibwa, who are organized in totemic clans, “the blessing of the clan animal is more easily attained

¹⁵² Boas: Kwakiutl, pp. 548-9.

¹⁵³ Boas: Fifth Report on the Northwest Tribes, p. 854.

by a member of the clan than by an outsider,"¹⁵⁴ and among the Winnebago the clan bundle was put in the child's fasting hut to insure a vision from an approved family tutelary.¹⁵⁵

The clan system might exist side by side with the utterly unlimited choice of guardian spirits, as for example, among the Crow,¹⁵⁶ the Lillooet,¹⁵⁷ or the Omaha.¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, a clear idea of descent might be characteristic of the guardian-spirit rights or paraphernalia and yet be at odds with the tribal social organization, even when it was dominated by a strong clan pattern. Among the Arikara of the Plains, descent was maternal in a characteristic clan setting;¹⁵⁹ the son, however, received his father's medicine bundle and if there were no son it was buried with the father in his grave.¹⁶⁰ A similar disparity occurs also among the neighboring Hidatsa, only here the process is singularly complicated: the son "inherits" the spirits, but he must purchase them, and must in addition have the identical vision.¹⁶¹ Four logically antithetical patterns, then, coexist in this tribe: paternal descent of the guardian spirit; the acquisition by vision; purchase; and the maternal clan. Yet the guardian spirit, with all these conceptually irreconcilable mechanisms, plays here as dominant a part in their culture as anywhere in North America.

The guardian-spirit concept, then, exhibits an almost constant tendency to externalize or perpetuate itself in some sort of social grouping. The connection which these form with the tribal social organization, however, follows no fixed rule. It is essentially fortuitous, and the result of specific factors in the tribal situation. Just as it is associated with the clan pattern in different ways, it exhibits an equal variation in its relation

¹⁵⁴ Radin: *Social Organization*, p. 24.

¹⁵⁵ Radin: *Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian*, p. 388 sq.

¹⁵⁶ Lowie: *Crow Religion*, pp. 324-344.

¹⁵⁷ Teit: *Lillooet*, p. 283.

¹⁵⁸ Fletcher: *Omaha*, p. 128.

¹⁵⁹ Goddard and Reichard: *Field notes*.

¹⁶⁰ Maximilian: *Reise*, vol. II, p. 247.

¹⁶¹ Lowie: *Hidatsa Sun Dance*, p. 416 sq.

with loose social organization. We should expect in such cases an absence or very weak development of the concept of inheritance, and this is widely true—complete absence among the Blackfoot and the Arapaho, for instance, and weak development among the Thompson and Nez Percé. On the other hand, as among the Northeastern Maidu of California, with the loosest social organization, inheritance in guardian spirits may be so strong that all children of a shaman—who alone have guardian spirits—must follow in his footsteps on pain of death, even if there be a half dozen.¹⁶²

4. *Totemism*. It is, however, in its association with totemism that theoretical discussion has most often argued a fixed and even a genetic relationship between a mode of socialization and the guardian spirit. Totemism does, indeed, bring into the sib organization a further attitude which, as Miss Fletcher has shown, is strikingly paralleled by that shown toward the guardian spirit.¹⁶³ As she points out, the clan totem represents the same class of objects as the guardian spirits, and forms the basis in the clan of “a sort of brotherhood” with which people have been made familiar in religious societies based on like guardian spirits. Since they were then so similar and “guardian spirits could be obtained in but one way—through the rite of the vision—the totem of the gens must have come into existence in that manner, and must have represented the manifestation of an ancestor’s vision.” This is very suggestive as a discussion of Omaha social organization and in certain ways indicates for this tribe the actual development, so far as we can see it; as in a very different setting it is true also for the Kwakiutl¹⁶⁴ and probably for neighboring tribes. It is, however, when a law is generalized from this as to the development of totemism from guardian-spirit beliefs as a universal ethnological phenomenon¹⁶⁵ that it is contradicted

¹⁶² Dixon: Northern Maidu, p. 274. .

¹⁶³ Fletcher: The Import of the Totem, pp. 325-335.

¹⁶⁴ Boas: Kwakiutl, pp. 323, 336, and 662.

¹⁶⁵ Hill-Tout: Totemism.

even by North American data. No factor which Miss Fletcher mentions in her argument is of universal distribution in North America, except the vision, and that is not an element sufficient in itself to produce totemism or we should find it from end to end of the continent, whereas it is actually very definitely localized. Even in the areas where it is developed, we do not necessarily find Miss Fletcher's other two factors: (1) the same class of spirits as guardians, and as totems, and (2) the preliminary organization into secret societies "which makes familiar the sense of brotherhood."

(1) It is noteworthy that, regarding the classes of spirits acquired as guardians, Francis La Flesche, the Omaha who collaborated with Miss Fletcher in her monograph on that Indian tribe, does not so closely identify totem and guardian spirit even for the Omaha. Only the lowest form of power was communicated by animals; above this was the power given by a cloud, or eagle-winged human being; above this again, that given by a spirit with no semblance, of which the voice alone was heard.¹⁶⁶ Of course the totems were exclusively animals. Among the totemically organized Menomini we have the specific statement that animals are rare as guardian spirits,¹⁶⁷ and we have already recorded certain texts that indicate the non-totemic nature of the Ojibwa and Winnebago tutelaries. Among the Wyandotte the distinction is absolute. No animal is ever sought as guardian spirit which is also eponym of a social group. Religious feeling is strongly associated with the guardian-spirit group, and is hardly discoverable in connection with the "totemic."¹⁶⁸

Among the Haida and in other Northwest tribes there was a similar tendency to differentiate totemic crests and guardian spirits, the latter being the prerogative of shamans. The Haida crests were killer whale, blue hawk, sea lion, horned owl,

¹⁶⁶ La Flesche: Omaha Funeral Customs, p. 3.

¹⁶⁷ Skinner: Menomini, p. 45.

¹⁶⁸ Personal communication from Mr. Barbeau. Wyandotte MSS.

flicker, etc.¹⁶⁹ The supernatural beings who spoke through shamans, that is, the guardian spirits, were Canoe People, Ocean People, Forest People, and Above People.¹⁷⁰

(2) Secret societies are so widespread in North America and psychologically so congenial in a totemic organization, that they inevitably seem a very possible step in the development of an intermittent totemism. They are, however, not universal; and where they are found may be organized in patterns quite independent of the guardian spirits; or stand in further ways outside the series. Among the Lillooet, where we have prominent guardian-spirit practices in a totemically organized tribe, there is no secret society organization.¹⁷¹ We know by comparison with the linguistically related Thompson that totemism is here a recent phenomenon;¹⁷² and since there are no secret societies it was not learned through previous experience in these organizations. This holds also for the Shuswap.¹⁷³

The Penobscot were organized into family groups distinguished by animal names, and a Penobscot referred to his animal as "my partner of a strange race." Certain physical peculiarities were attributed to the mythical relationship between the present day human and animal families.¹⁷⁴ But such totemic phenomena did not grow out of secret societies, which were here unknown in any form.

Even when societies exist in a totemic community with guardian-spirit practices, they may be a side issue unrelated to either. Among the Yuchi the societies are paternal in a maternal organization. They take today a more prominent part in tribal life than the clan. In no conceivable sense was it a step from the individual guardian spirits to totems: guardian

¹⁶⁹ Swanton: *The Haida*, p. 108.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 38.

¹⁷¹ Teit: *Lillooet*.

¹⁷² Goldenweiser: *Social Organization*, 359.

¹⁷³ Teit: *Shuswap*.

¹⁷⁴ Speck: *Algonkian Family Hunting Bands*, p. 300.

spirits were communicated in a democratic totemic rite; societies were definitely hostile to one another, with distinct caste ranking and inalienable membership through the father.¹⁷⁵ Among the Mandan, who had maternal clans with totemic names so far as they are translatable, but no veneration or idea of descent from the animal, societies were again enormously important, and their activities were elaborated to a high degree of complexity. Admission to one after another of the series was, however, bought by an entire class of co-evals, and as among the Hidatsa, there was little or no religious significance.¹⁷⁶ On the contrary, their guardian-spirit practices were highly charged with religious feeling.¹⁷⁷ Here again the societies of the Village tribes stand as an outside factor, hard to place in any genetic sequence with either guardian spirits or totemism.

On the Northwest Coast there is an interrelation between guardian spirits, societies, and clan totemism almost as intimate as among the Omaha. As Prof. Boas has pointed out among the Kwakiutl, "The same psychological factor which moulded the clans into their present shape moulded the secret societies"¹⁷⁸—a factor compounded of the guardian-spirit idea and of the notion of caste privilege observed among the northern tribes. But he finds no trace of an evolving series from manitou beliefs, through secret societies, and finally to clan totems; rather the explanation must be looked for in a different quarter, and from the consideration of the whole data he suggests that the origin of the secret society may be in customs relating to warfare.¹⁷⁹ Here again, then, though after a different fashion, secret societies are, as so often in other areas, an issue, in the main, aside from any series originating in manitou beliefs and culminating in totemic phenomena.

¹⁷⁵ Speck: Yuchi, p. 75.

¹⁷⁶ Lowie: Mandan Social Organization, p. 9.

¹⁷⁷ Maximilian: Reise, vol. II, p. 187, sq.

¹⁷⁸ Boas: Kwakiutl, p. 662.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 164.

But if it is only in individual instances and without a set mechanism of development through secret societies that it seems likely that totemism has developed from the guardian-spirit concept, there is very much less basis for the opposite theory, that advanced by Durkheim in *Les Formes élémentaires de la Vie religieuse*. Speaking of the guardian-spirit concept, which he calls the individual totem, "the individual aspect," he considers, "represents a part, or a particular aspect, of the collective totem." "It is within the frame of collective totemism that it lives and dies; it is an integral part of it."¹⁸⁰

On the contrary, on the basis of data already quoted, we know that the guardian spirit flourishes exceedingly outside a totemic organization. There are the Eskimo, from Alaska to Greenland; the greater part of the Wabanaki and Déné tribes inhabiting practically all Canada east of the Rockies; the Indians of the Great Plains, except on the eastern fringe; the Plateau, and the great majority of the tribes of the United States west of the Rockies. This is altogether an immense area, more than half of the continent of North America. As competent observers have over and over again failed to discover totemism or even survivals of any sort of a clan-gens system in this generally most primitive region of North America; and have meanwhile unanimously testified to the conspicuous and many-sided rôle of the guardian spirit—Durkheim's individual totem—we may regard the evidence as relatively conclusive.

Even in the areas where a totemic organization is found, "the individual aspect," moreover, takes a variety of contradictory forms, which are by no means capable of passing as "particular aspects of the collective totem." They are far from belonging exclusively to the same class of phenomena (see above, p. 58); they need not follow the totemic pattern of descent (see above, p. 56), being particularly liable to be regarded as a thing of predisposition; or they may belong to an entirely different category as to the veneration accorded them.

¹⁸⁰ P. 179.

Thus among the Missouri village tribes of the Plains, though we have in some cases totemically named clans, we have never a trace of veneration. The Hidatsa origin story of the Prairie Chicken clan relates how a few young men on a war party stopped over night among some bushes such as prairie chickens frequent. Accordingly, the rest of the people called them Prairie Chickens.¹⁸¹ On the contrary, the fervor of the pursuit of guardian spirits and the veneration accorded the bundle scheme based upon them, are the most striking religious and ritualistic facts of their culture.¹⁸² On no one of these counts then can we identify the guardian spirit as "a particular aspect of the collective totem."

Durkheim also makes a claim of priority for totemism over against the guardian-spirit concept. "Individual totemism presupposes the totemism of the clan." He denies that the "individual totem is really a primitive fact from which the collective totem was derived."¹⁸³ In this Dr. Haddon concurs, for the reason that "the conception of an individual spirit helper appears to me to be of higher grade than the ideas generally expressed by purely totemic peoples."¹⁸⁴ And Sidney Hartland also, in speaking at any rate of British Columbia, expresses his belief in the modern date of the manitou conception "as part of the individualism which is tending to obscure the older communistic traditions."¹⁸⁵

Such conclusions are in opposition to a more strict procedure for chronological determination. In general the larger the area of distribution, the older we may judge the trait to be. As we have seen, there is no area of North America in which it is not either present in recent practice, or may not be found in the older documents. It is clearly present also in Central America. Over the entire area, moreover, we have traced the

¹⁸¹ Lowie: Mandan and Hidatsa Social Organization, p. 20.

¹⁸² Wilson and Pepper: Hidatsa Shrine, p. 305 sq.

¹⁸³ P. 179.

¹⁸⁴ Haddon: Totemism, p. 702.

¹⁸⁵ Hartland: Presidential Address, p. 68.

association of the vision with that of the guardian spirit—a fact which makes it exceedingly unlikely that it was due to independent development, and its distribution thus a matter independent of chronology.

As a trait of very ancient origin, moreover, the guardian-spirit concept is (1) universally reflected in tribal mythology, (2) knit in the most coherent fashion with diverse cultures from end to end of the continent—and beyond, and (3) “so ramified” over and over again “in cultural wholes as to meet us at every step.” Finally, if our analysis of the “overlays” among the Pawnee, Iroquois, and in the Southwest is correct, we must assume an antiquity in the case of the guardian-spirit concept sufficient to allow for the necessarily immense stretches of time which would be necessary for the growth, for instance, of the entire ceremonial systematization of the Southwest.¹⁸⁶

There is no comparable case to be made out for the antiquity of totemism in North America. Even the clan-gens systems of the continent, which have a wider distribution than any sort of totemic phenomena, are very far indeed from any comparable distribution,¹⁸⁷ and the evidence shows that this is not due to the loss of a primitive sib organization.¹⁸⁸ On the contrary, sib systems have grown up in a number of different and isolated localities,¹⁸⁹ with very different associated ideas. The association of totemic ideas with these sib systems is even less widespread,¹⁹⁰ and seems in some cases a comparatively late development. Even today we may trace processes that are still acting to bring about the existence of totemic phenomena in previously non-totemic tribes.¹⁹¹

We must assume, I think, that nothing in the totemic situa-

¹⁸⁶ For this paragraph, see especially, Sapir: *Time Perspective*.

¹⁸⁷ Swanton: *Reconstruction*, p. 170.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 173.

¹⁸⁹ Lowie: *Primitive Society*, p. 122 sq.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 144.

¹⁹¹ Swanton: *Reconstruction*, pp. 176-7; Goldenweiser, *Social Organization*, p. 359.

tion in North America suggests an antiquity comparable to that which is manifest in the guardian-spirit concept.

There is, however, another problem which from the point of view of this analysis is more significant than the sporadic development of totemism from the guardian spirit, or the very improbable development of guardian-spirit concepts from a preceding totemism. If, as we have attempted to show, the complexes formed by the union of guardian-spirit ideas with social organization depend upon specific factors, and vary far too widely to be reduced to a formula, there is left, nevertheless, the problem of the inter-action of their characteristic attitudes, one upon the other, in different parts of the continent. Dr. Goldenweiser in his study of *Totemism* has already suggested the importance of such reciprocal influences. "The particular religious coloring assumed by totemism in any given cultural area may be due to the presence in that area of beliefs which are in no way totemic in their origin nor in their manifestations, outside the totemic complex."¹⁹² And Dr. Radin in his description of Winnebago social organization remarks that "we must expect to find an explanation of the attitude toward them (totems) as clan animals in the attitude the Winnebago exhibits toward the guardian spirit."¹⁹³

Religious veneration of the totem, as has been shown by Dr. Goldenweiser,¹⁹⁴ is very rare among primitive peoples outside of North America. Such an attitude, then, as that shown by the Osage, a Siouan tribe of the southern Plains, is all the more notable. At the great tribal rite of the chiefs, all gentes have simultaneous ceremonials according to a similar pattern. The words of the Black Bear gens are typical:

Verily, at that time and place, it has been said, in this house,
The Honga, a people who possess seven fireplaces,
Spake to the Wacabeton, (the gens whose symbol is the Black Bear),
saying:

¹⁹² P. 264.

¹⁹³ P. 23.

¹⁹⁴ Goldenweiser: *Totemism*, p. 258, sq.

"O, grandfather,
The little ones have nothing of which to make their bodies."
The Wacabeton made quick response: "O, little ones,
You say the little ones have nothing of which to make their bodies.
Let the little ones make of me their bodies."¹⁹⁵

And the chant of the mussel gens continues:

"Verily, I am the person that hath made of the mussel his body.
When the little ones make of me their bodies,
They shall always live to see old age.
Behold the wrinkles upon my skin (shell),
Which I have made to be the means of reaching old age.
When the little ones make of me their bodies,
They shall always live to see signs of old age upon their skins.
The seven bends of the river (river of life)
I always pass successfully,
And in my travels the gods themselves
Have not the power to see the trail I make.
When the little ones make of me their bodies,
No one, not even the gods, shall be able to see the trails they make."¹⁹⁶

The religious attitude toward the totem is obvious. But the most interesting fact in this connection is that these chants, the expression of the relationship of the gens and its totem, are strictly analogous to the chants of the chief—might we not call him the high priest?—relating a triple guardian-spirit vigil, where, after fasts of seven days and nights, his tutelaries were revealed to him.¹⁹⁷ The parallelism of thought and imagery, the equivalent symbolism, reveal strikingly the influence upon the totemic complex of the sacred character of the guardian spirit and of the nature of its gifts to those within its protection.

From this point of view, the totemic area of the Central Algonkian forms a unit with the Omaha and Osage. Everywhere there is a relatively heightened sense of a spiritual connection with the eponym. How definite this Fox attitude is, is shown in certain remarks of a Fox Indian. "There is no difference between a bear and one who goes by the name of a

¹⁹⁵ La Flesche: Osage, p. 105.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 94.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 84-91.

bear; both are one and the same. The fox and a member of the Fox clan are one and the same person. The fox is guardian to all those who bear the fox name."¹⁹⁸ Among the Winnebago, as elsewhere, this religious totemic attitude has gathered into itself the widespread medicine-bundle concept. The specific possessions of the clans are certain war bundles, one in each clan. The Winnebago winter feasts are ceremonies built up around these clan bundles, which "as their individual history shows, are merely gifts from one spirit. The winter feast is then a society of all those who have obtained blessings, (for example) from the thunder bird."¹⁹⁹ If, as Dr. Radin suggests, these clan feasts are really religious societies in which the influence of the sib idea has restricted participation to the membership of the clan—though with possible exceptions in the case of an outsider with a specific vision bundle from that spirit—the transference of attitude toward the guardian spirit to that toward the totem is absolutely direct. It is even a clearer example of the evolution suggested by Miss Fletcher for the Omaha.

It is when we generalize this interpenetration in this central area of North America, that we falsify conditions elsewhere. We have noted the lack of any transference of attitude between the two in the case of the Mandan. Among the Wyandotte²⁰⁰ the religious feeling is strong for the tutelary, but rudimentary for the totemic animal. The situation is equally striking among the Lillooet of British Columbia. The Iroquois also must have presented the same picture in the time of the Jesuit Fathers. We have for that time no evidence of a religious attitude toward the totem, while, as we have seen, we have record of their guardian-spirit practices.

In the Northwest, totemic phenomena are at every step intelligible only in connection with the guardian-spirit beliefs,

¹⁹⁸ Jones: Notes on the Fox Indians, p. 216.

¹⁹⁹ Radin: Winnebago Social Organization, p. 40.

²⁰⁰ Barbeau: MSS, Wyandotte.

and the situation is too complicated to admit of dogmatic assertions. Still, it seems fair to point out that in the constant interaction between the two, it is the guardian spirit as an item of social organization that has triumphed over the guardian spirit as a religious experience. We have only to contrast the Kwakiutl requirements for obtaining a guardian, with the simple vision-experience of the Omaha, or the Winnebago. Or the assignment of a tutelary among the Kwakiutl or the Tshimshian to an infant, that it may be from birth a member of an upper, that is, initiated class.²⁰¹ The influence of the guardian spirit upon totemism, as involving heightened religious coloring, is seen primarily in the origin myths, and in the attitude toward the spirit giving the crest.

Totemism in North America, therefore, according to various patterns and in differing degrees, tends to take its coloring from the guardian-spirit concept, and the high-water marks of a religious attitude towards the totem, which beyond doubt are found on this continent, are intelligible from this fact. In spite of this, totemic societies are also found quite uninfluenced by this guardian-spirit cycle, however strongly it might be developed even in that particular totemic tribe. We are dealing, then, with a situation essentially similar to that of puberty rites, or the secret societies, which, in North America, did with great frequency stand in some sort of relation to the guardian-spirit cycle, but which might be, and often were, organized on entirely other bases.

5. *Shamanism*. Shamanism, unlike puberty ceremonials, totemism, or secret societies, is practically everywhere in some fashion or in some aspect built around the vision-guardian-spirit complex, but the two are associated according to very different patterns. 

A. According to the democratic practices typical of the Plains, all men must seek the guardian spirit by way of the vision, and there is properly no shamanistic class. All men have

²⁰¹ Boas: Fifth Report on Northwest Tribes, p. 854.

personal relations with the supernatural; those who become especially noteworthy in their success in healing, procuring desired weather conditions, or insuring a successful chase or war party, do, however, come to be singled out as medicine men. It is a demarcation only between those with more or less supernatural power, and no stronger than between those possessed of more or less bravery or wealth.

B. All men may seek guardian spirits, and a certain class of tutelaries may entail the adoption of the shamanistic profession. This is the practice of the Thompson, and of the Plateau in general. In a different setting, it plays a part on the Northwest coast.

C. All men may seek the guardian spirit, and it may be regarded as the essential part of the shaman's equipment. Nevertheless, the demarcation between shamans and non-shamans is drawn on lines aside from guardian-spirit considerations—usually payment, or apprenticeship to an experienced shaman whose place the candidate may occupy at his death. Or it may be that the shamanistic profession will descend only by heredity.

D. Guardian spirits may be the prerogative strictly of the shaman, who alone seeks the vision. This is characteristic of California, and of the Penobscot, and the Eskimo.

E. It may be not the guardian spirit but the vision that is the prerogative of the shaman. Guardian spirits meanwhile may be considered as belonging to every man in consequence of initiation into the clan.²⁰²

There is, then, no fixity in the tribal conventions by which shamans are related to their guardian-spirit vigils. The connections are in every case matters of social patterning.

As we have already noted (pp.32-40), there are also noteworthy exceptions in North America to this interrelation of shamanism with tribal guardian-spirit practices; both among the Iroquois and in the Southwest it is built up, for the most part, upon

²⁰² Speck: Yuchi.

other considerations. It would seem that this divorce had taken place sporadically also, as among the Southern Wintun, the Patwin, of California. Among these people shamanism is an hereditary privilege of a paternal family, as salmon fishing, basket making, and ceremonial fire-tending are hereditary privileges of other families. An amulet or medicine was inherited by every member of the family who practised his rightful prerogative, but no vision experiences or special tutelary concepts are recorded.²⁰³ The similarity of the native attitude to that on Vancouver Island, for instance, in its stress on prerogative and inheritance, makes it all the more striking that where so small a shift could obliterate the vision and the guardian spirit from the tribal pattern, the sporadic case of the Patwin stands practically alone.

Up to this point I have used the word *shaman* as a convenient designation for all religious practitioners. This usage, however, is by no means an accurate reflection of native thought. In the majority of North American tribes there is no blanket term for any such group. Differentiation exists practically everywhere except in one area, which, from our present knowledge, seems to be continuous, centering in the Plateau and running north through the Déné and the Eskimo; in the east covering a strip of the Western Plains; and in the southwest a strip of central California. Everywhere else, native custom classifies, but the demarcations are various. For ease of discussion we may group the native distinctions into those classes (1) where members of one class may be also members of the other, and (2) where they are mutually exclusive, perhaps mutually opposed.

(1) In by far the most extended center of this first, not mutually exclusive, type, the different classes of medicine men are so little related that it is almost impossible even to contrast them one with another. The Central Algonkian have the strongly developed organized rite of the Midewiwin, "which

²⁰³ McKern: *Functional Families of the Patwin*, p. 246 sq.

has developed from the cohesion of different cultural elements. Yet outside of, and disassociated from, this organization, two professional classes of shamans—Wabano and Djesakid—occur in practically all the tribes of this group.”²⁰⁴ The initiation in all three is on the basis of guardian spirit revelation, except that purchase is today standardized for the Midewiwin²⁰⁵ There is no feeling of differentiation between those practising good and evil magic; the myths describe the activities of all classes with equal approbation;²⁰⁶ in fact all three are set over against the evil witches’ society.²⁰⁷ It would be easiest to understand these widespread disassociated and yet parallel coexisting types of medicine men as separate cults of quite similar pattern; yet there is no organization except for the Midi and these seem once to have been individual practitioners.²⁰⁸ The shamanistic classes may be representative of different strands introduced by diffusion—for example, the Wabano specialize in fire tricks which are identical with those of the Dakota Heyoka.²⁰⁹ Or they may have had their origin in the vision of individuals in this area and thus naturally conform closely to a similar pattern. There is no restriction as to a medicine man of one type joining also the ranks of the other.

This non-exclusive type of shamanistic categories we find again on the southern Pacific Coast. The Wasco, a Chinook tribe on the southern shore of the Columbia, and the Maidu to the south, may be taken as examples. The distinctions they drew, however, were not the same; the Maidu set over against the curing doctor the dreamer who was also able to communicate with ghosts, but all healers also spoke with spirits, though not vice versa.²¹⁰ The Wasco had shooting doctors and cura-

²⁰⁴ Speck: *Penobscot Shamanism*, p. 275.

²⁰⁵ Radin: *Winnebago Medicine Dance*, p. 183.

²⁰⁶ Jones: *Ojibwa Texts*, p. 315.

²⁰⁷ Hoffman: *Menomini*, p. 182 sq.

²⁰⁸ Radin: *Winnebago Medicine Dance*, p. 180.

²⁰⁹ Skinner: *Menomini*, p. 191.

²¹⁰ Dixon: *Northern Maidu*, p. 271.

tive ones, the shooting ones being the higher.²¹¹ Wherever we have direct statement in this area, the power of the medicine man in every category came from guardian spirits in a vision.

(2) Usually, however, the two or more categories of shamans were looked upon as mutually exclusive. This was probably the rule along the Atlantic seaboard. Heckewelder distinguishes among the Delaware the Medeu, the physician, from the Powwow, or juggler, the shaman proper, much higher in rank, gifted with divination.²¹² Among the Lenape, medicine men were organized in two societies, holders of good medicine and of bad.²¹³ Among the Cherokee, tradition preserves the story of a hereditary caste of priests which was murdered by the tribe leaving the field exclusively to the individual shamanistic practitioners.²¹⁴ Among the Penobscot we meet again the distinction between dreamers and magicians. The dreamers were a much humbler sort to whom the future was foretold in dreams; balls of fire sometimes issued from their lips during revelation.²¹⁵ They never caused harm, as the shamans proper were only too likely to do. The Hupa distinguished a dancing doctor who diagnosed the disease, and a sucking doctor, who was able to cure. At initiation the sucking doctor got the "pain"—the usual crystal object of northern California—and the dancing doctor, the vision. Both again were set over against the witches.²¹⁶ Among the Takelma, the relation between the two classes was one of recognized hostility, the beneficent shaman being often hired to counteract the work of the malignant. They appealed to entirely different spirits as supernatural helpers and made use of different medicine songs.²¹⁷ It was possible, when it was suspected that one of these danger-

²¹¹ Sapir: *Takelma Indians*, p. 45.

²¹² Heckewelder: *Indians of Pennsylvania*, p. 228, sq.

²¹³ Harrington: *Preliminary Study of Lenape*, p. 217.

²¹⁴ Mooney: *Cherokee Myths*, pp. 392-393.

²¹⁵ Speck: *Penobscot Shamanism*, p. 288.

²¹⁶ Goddard: *Hupa*, p. 65.

²¹⁷ Sapir: *Takelma*, p. 45.

ous shamans had over-indulged his power to "eat up people," for the good shaman to drive out his guardian spirits visibly from his bound body. As many as twenty such tutelaries were known to have been driven out of one such goyó.²¹⁸ But the helper of either type was obtained in the same way, by vision.

But it is among the Pawnee that the theoretical distinction between their holy men becomes of greatest importance. The whole sanction and authority for the Skidi federation rests on the bundle scheme presided over by the priests; the shamans are a thing apart.²¹⁹ Shamans received their power from the animal lodges, priests from the gods of the heavens;²²⁰ shamans have to do with healing, priests with war and the procuring of food; shamans specialize in sleight of hand, priests are occupied in following the nearly unbroken ritual throughout the year. In theory, no shaman enters the rites of the priestly cycle, and vice versa. The vision, however, is an essential for both orders and the myths stress it equally in the stories of priests and of shamans. For both orders the predisposition is stressed along with emphasis on the extraordinary experience: "Crow Feather was very peculiar. He never took part in ceremonials; he never consecrated buffalo to propitiate the gods. Every night he went out in the hills, gazed at the sky, wondering at the powers there." He was blest with a vision.²²¹ "As the child grew he developed many mysterious ways and acted peculiarly."²²² Over and over again this peculiarity is stressed in all visions. In certain myths the two groups are put specifically on a par as far as supernatural experience goes; one, for instance, tells the story of one who was eventually struck by lightning and heard its language. "He had been wandering over the

²¹⁸ Sapir: *Takelma Texts*, p. 183.

²¹⁹ Wissler: *Pawnee Religion*, MSS.

²²⁰ Dorsey: *Traditions of Skidi Pawnee*, XIX.

²²¹ Murie: *Pawnee Societies*, p. 609.

²²² Dorsey: *Pawnee*, p. 241. See also pp. 62, 261, 346; *Skidi Pawnee*, p. 44, 199.

land, and the gods in the heavens had refused to listen to him; the animal gods had also refused to hear him crying."²²³

Various attempts have been made to represent in some way these enormously common classifications of the tribal medicine men. It has been proposed that the word "shaman" be limited to denote those psychically sensitive individuals who derive their religious prestige from supernatural experience, and be set over against that of "priest," the keeper of the rites and traditions and sacred things of the tribe. "The priest then must master with infinite detail the arbitrary forms of rituals. In last analysis, the priest must be a man of intellect; the shaman may be a veritable idiot."²²⁴

However closely this follows the distinction in the Maya and Aztec centers of the south, for North America it seems to be significant in very few settings. It is not easily applicable even in the extreme case of the Pawnee, for the supernormal experience was stressed with apparently equal emphasis for both groups. For the Central Algonkian it is more applicable since the Midi did develop complex ritual and did continually substitute purchase for the vision, as a requirement for admission. But, as a category of clairvoyants and of priests, I doubt whether it would be recognized by an Ojibwa or a Menomini. The classes are too far disassociated—unorganized cults with different practices and tricks—but essentially moulded by the same tribal pattern.

The Cherokee myth, if it is indeed history, suits well with the priest-shaman distinction, as does all we know of the Natchez Suns and medicine men,²²⁵ though whether the demarcation represented a distinction between supernatural experience and guardianship of sacred lore, we shall never know.²²⁶ On the Atlantic seaboard we should judge that tribal tradition was in the keeping of the civil chief; of the classes of the medicine

²²³ Dorsey: *Skidi Pawnee*, p. 95.

²²⁴ Wissler: *American Indian*, p. 191.

²²⁵ Swanton: *Tribes of the Lower Mississippi*, pp. 80 and 174.

²²⁶ But see *ibid*, p. 178.

men, the Powow had much the higher prestige, the Medeu being a sort of religious herbalist.²²⁷ On the Northwest coast, nothing in all the varied native classifications suggests alignment as priests and shamans.

Essentially priestly functions were however exercised in the Northwest quite outside the ranks of religious practitioners. The chief has certain functions of conducting the ritual and making the spirits "come through" the candidates, which are very similar to the priestly character.²²⁸ Among the Thompson River Indians, the chief leads in all religious affairs, and is more of a high priest than a civil officer.²²⁹ Indeed, it is quite usual to find priestly functions exercised by tribal chiefs in many cases as among the Osage,²³⁰ Cheyenne,²³¹ Iroquois,²³² and the Natchez,²³³ and at least for the North American Indians, it is arbitrary to assign such functions to a subdivision of the category of medicine men.

Just as priestly functions are at times exercised by religious practitioners, and at times by those outside their ranks, so it is equally significant that at the other extreme of shamanistic practices witchcraft is sometimes within, and sometimes without, this complex. The Central Algonkian, the Takelma, the Penobscot, and others (see above pp. 44-45) regard witchcraft as one of the gifts of tutelaries, and the powers are acquired in the same fashion as more legitimate guardians. On the contrary, witches on the Northwest Coast are entirely outside the religious realm. For the Tsimshian, as for the Kwakiutl, witchcraft and shamanism were entirely distinct.²³⁴ Witches achieved their purposes by burning pieces of the enemy's clothing with a

²²⁷ Heckewelder: *Indians of Pennsylvania*, p. 228, sq.

²²⁸ Swanton: *Haida*, p. 38.

²²⁹ Swanton: Article, *Shamanism*, in *Handbook*.

²³⁰ La Flesche: *Osage*, pp. 70, 71, 84, ff.

²³¹ Grinnell: *Cheyenne Mysteries*, p. 544.

²³² Hale: *Book of Rites*, p. 59, sq.

²³³ Swanton: *Lower Mississippi Tribes*, p. 175.

²³⁴ Boas: *Tsimshian*, p. 563.

corpse, or by a more complicated ceremony, operating however with the same paraphernalia.²³⁵ For the Déné, "ordinary mortals" practised witchcraft.²³⁶

Among the Haida, "anyone might become a wizard, if he possessed himself of the proper formulae."²³⁷

Much less obvious distinctions were also made on the Pacific Coast, between the functions of those having supernatural experiences and those not having them. Thus among the Nootka, those having fasted and obtained guardians "caught souls," that is, they knew when souls were absent, and could go after them and restore them to the body, and so prevent death; but the doctors proper, the "workers" who cured all diseases due to all other causes than the wandering of the soul, required no supernatural experiences. The soul-catchers were the higher in prestige.²³⁸ Among the Songish, of southern Vancouver Island, the duties of both these classes were combined in the *squnä'am*, the higher class of shamans, who became such by intercourse with supernatural beings; but a second class, the *sī'ōua*, were taught by other *sī'ōua*, upon payment of heavy fees for instruction. Her functions—for this person was generally a woman—were the appeasing of hostile powers. She addressed them in a sacred language summoning good luck. She had, too, along with the *squnä'am*, certain powers over diseases not due to absence of the soul from the body.²³⁹

The native categories into which medicine men are divided in North America are hardly, then, represented in any significant way by a priest-shaman distinction. Priesthood, on the one hand, and witchcraft on the other, exist sometimes with, and sometimes without, the accompanying requirement of supernatural experience. On the other hand, the distinction between the functions of those having visions, and those not

²³⁵ Boas: Tenth Report on Northwest Tribes, p. 581.

²³⁶ Morice, Déné, p. 208.

²³⁷ Swanton: The Haida, p. 41.

²³⁸ Boas: Sixth Report on Northwest Tribes, p. 596.

²³⁹ Ibid, p. 580 sq.

having them may be that between doctors and appeasers of evil spirits; between soul-catchers and curers. The whole situation is entirely without rule; the categories which occur in any case are due again to specific factors, and have no universal or functional significance. They may be reflections sometimes of the differentiated activities of the shamans—as of good and evil, prophesying and curing; still more often, perhaps, the outstanding fact is that a practice of definite geographical distribution has been drawn in different parts of this area into different antitheses. So the dreamers who are familiar to us in Iroquois practice, among the Penobscot are contrasted with the magicians; and the fire-handlers of the Plains become among the Algonkian a shamanistic group set over against the Midi and the Djesakid.

6. *Economic Life.* Just as the guardian spirit enters in certain localities into the closest relationship with totemism, secret societies, or puberty rites, so in equivalent fashion, it enters the economic life of a people. There are of course areas where the one is entirely divorced from the other. This is especially true, for instance, of Central California, where the characteristic involuntary visions of the shamans were for healing, or the knowledge of procedure in mourning, and the like; and had the slightest possible relation to wealth, directly, or indirectly. This is true in general wherever guardian spirits were prerogatives of the medicine men, as for example among the Penobscot.

Among the Haida, wealth itself might be a guardian spirit in the character of Property Woman and her child²⁴⁰ and there, as also generally upon the Plateau and the Plains, one sought a tutelary for success in obtaining the things of this world. The vision, that is, was an instrumentality turned chiefly toward the social life, one aspect of which is always economic. "Through visions one might rise from abject poverty to social prestige."²⁴¹ It depended on the idea of success current in the

²⁴⁰ Swanton: Haida, p. 29.

²⁴¹ Lowie: Crow Religion, p. 323.

tribe, what aspect was emphasized. Among the Central Algonkian, the stress on economic success was more than equalled by that on long life and divination and success in passing the dangers of the world to come.²⁴² But here, too, among the neighboring Winnebago the counsels of the elders emphasize the presence of the economic motive. "Fast for your position in life." "You have it in your power to see to it that you will never be hungry," that is, by obtaining a vision.²⁴³

Such counsels are unthinkable on Puget Sound. Here, there was apparently no connection with wealth, or with any kind of prestige. A powerful man might have a tutelary, but he might not. And one who was not a shaman, and had a guardian spirit, was regarded as "just harmless."²⁴⁴

It is, however, through purchase that the guardian spirit enters the economic life directly, and becomes a corner stone of it. This has happened among the Blackfoot. Visions are salable. Each man must go out once in his life to seek a vision on his own account. In order to obtain a recognized position in the tribe, however, he must also buy other men's visions. These he will recount in the first person, exactly as he tells those which have appeared to him personally. Such transfer is known as "purchasing the medicine bundle," but what he really buys is the vision, and its song and special powers; the bundle he often makes up anew according to specifications.²⁴⁵

This exchange of commodities as represented by visions has become the basis of the tribal economic system. Young men were urged to purchase medicine bundles as those with us are urged to open a savings bank account. They were good investments. Dandies purchased them to display their wealth.²⁴⁶ The Blackfoot held tribal gatherings where they recited the bundles they had owned, and the property they

²⁴² Jones: *Ojibwa Texts*, pp. 537, 577.

²⁴³ Radin: *Autobiography of a Winnebago*, p. 454.

²⁴⁴ Haeberlin: MSS. Puget Sound.

²⁴⁵ Wissler: *Blackfoot Bundles*, p. 288.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 288.

had paid for them. Those who had a long list were cheered, while those having a short one were ridiculed.²⁴⁷ Other things besides visions were swept into this general procedure. Shirts of the ordinary Plains pattern; privileges of performing certain portions of ceremonial, such as the torture, for instance—the Sun dance itself—were all treated in the same manner.²⁴⁸

Nowhere probably are guardian spirits as basic in the economic system as among the Blackfoot, but they may be purchased in the same way among the Crow,²⁴⁹ Arapaho,²⁵⁰ Hidatsa,²⁵¹ Winnebago,²⁵² Ojibwa,²⁵³ and Sarsi.²⁵⁴

Among the Copper Eskimo, control over any familiar may be obtained by purchase, but all that the owner can impart is his good will and the knowledge of how to approach and summon the particular spirit that has been bought. The aspirant must go out to some lonely place and summon the spirit, which may or may not appear.²⁵⁵

In such a case, the distinction between buying the guardian spirit and paying for instruction is impossible to determine; it may be that it is specifically the shamanistic instruction which is obtained by the required payment. So the Kwakiutl could buy the practice of shamanism at the throwing dance, and the purchaser and his instructor would then retire to the woods for four days.²⁵⁶ And among the Ojibwa if a man did not have a dream to that effect, he paid preliminary fees to an individual shaman, and additional amounts for every degree he undertook.²⁵⁷

²⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 276.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 107, sq.

²⁴⁹ Lowie: Crow Religion, p. 323.

²⁵⁰ Kroeber: Arapaho, p. 450.

²⁵¹ Lowie: Hidatsa Sun Dance, p. 416.

²⁵² Radin: Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian, p. 459.

²⁵³ Skinner: Midewiwin of Ojibwa, p. 163.

²⁵⁴ Goddard: Sarsi Texts, p. 233.

²⁵⁵ Jenness: Copper Eskimo, p. 191.

²⁵⁶ Boas: Fifth Report on Northwest Tribes, p. 570.

²⁵⁷ Hoffman: Midewiwin of Ojibwa, p. 163.

7. *Miscellaneous Culture Traits.* Whatever it is we fix our attention upon, the type of culture-trait association into which it enters with the guardian-spirit concept is equivalent. It is as true of an object of material culture as of puberty rites. There has been reported over a very large part of North America, from Alaska to Alabama, and from New Mexico to the Great Lakes, a most curious taboo, for the principal actor of a ceremony, against scratching the head or body with the hand. To this end there is provided a head-scratcher of bone or wood. The emotional stability of this trifle is very striking; its instability of objective association, equally so. Among the Creek of the Southeast, in 1800, the head-scratcher was obligatory during the guardian-spirit puberty fast. "During this period he must not pick his ears nor scratch his head with his fingers, but use a small stick."²⁵⁸ Here then it is paraphernalia of the vision quest.

Among the Thompson River Indians of British Columbia, likewise, boys wore a small bone during the puberty isolation for the same purpose,²⁵⁹ but here girls wore it also during their seclusion, which, as we saw, had usually no guardian-spirit objective.²⁶⁰ From British Columbia to New Mexico it is over and over reported as having entered exclusively into the girls' puberty rites.²⁶¹

Among the Pima, of the extreme Southwest, there exists a very elaborate ceremonial purification of the warrior who has slain an enemy, culminating in a tribal war dance. During the twenty days of this ceremony, the man who is purified must wear his hair knotted in a peculiar fashion, through which his scratching stick is thrust.²⁶² But in Alaska, the scratching

²⁵⁸ Hawkins: Creek Confederacy, p. 78.

²⁵⁹ Teit: Thompson River Indians, p. 318.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 312.

²⁶¹ Teit: Shuswap, p. 588; Haeberlin: MSS, Puget Sound; Sapir: Nootka Girls' Ceremonial, p. 78; Goddard: Hupa, p. 53; Dixon: Maidu, p. 233; Sparkman: Luiseño, p. 266; Goddard: (Apache) Handbook, p. 172.

²⁶² Lloyd: Pima Myths, p. 90, sq.

stick is worn around the shaman's neck as part of his distinguishing costume.²⁶³ And among the Ojibwa it entered into still another complex, and the scratching stick was required on a novice's first three war expeditions.²⁶⁴

Such an example from the realm of material culture reduces to its most obvious form this desultory association of culture traits. Perhaps it is equally obvious in the distribution of certain wide-spread folkloristic concepts, as, for instance, the loss of the soul before death. In native thought this entails illness and finally death, all of which it is the duty of the shaman to counteract. This concept is prominent among the Chuckchee of northeastern Asia.²⁶⁵ It explains all illness among the Eskimo of Smith Sound;²⁶⁶ it occurs among the Haida, down the length of the Pacific Coast,²⁶⁷ and as far inland as the Thompson River.²⁶⁸ In Laguna, in the Southwest, it was the heart that was similarly lost and restored.²⁶⁹

In the region of Puget Sound, the idea was elaborated until it became one of the most prominent features of their cultural life. Only here it was not the soul that was lost, but the guardian spirit. That is, here this widespread mythological concept of the lost soul has been reinterpreted according to orthodox guardian-spirit formalae. There are among these Salish two types of guardian spirits: one shamanistic, of which all refer to the power of healing; one profane, in the sense that they are for individual profit in gambling, hunting and fishing, etc. It is this profane tutelary that is lost, and the shamans who seek it must have one particular subdivision of shamanistic spirits which gives them this prerogative. The ceremony which is dramatized out of the notion of the journey

²⁶³ Swanton: Tlingit, p. 464.

²⁶⁴ Tanner: Narrative, p. 122.

²⁶⁵ Bogoras: Traditions of Northeast Asia, p. 589.

²⁶⁶ Rasmussen: Life with the Eskimo, p. 110.

²⁶⁷ Goddard: Hupa Texts, p. 248; Boas: Kwakiutl, p. 561; Boas: Tsimshian, p. 558 sq.; Hooper: Cahuilla, p. 340.

²⁶⁸ Teit: Thompson River, p. 363 and 342.

²⁶⁹ Parsons: Laguna, p. 118, sq.

of the shamans to the land of the dead in search of the tutelary is the most prominent in the whole cultural area. It requires the coöperation of eight shamans, and, since so many are never blessed with this type of guardian in any one tribe, the ceremony becomes thus a great intertribal affair. If on their return the shamans sing the guardian-spirit song of anyone at all, it is a sign that his tutelary, unknown to him, has been gone, and is now brought back by the returning shamans. He is of course grateful and willing to pay heavily for their services in restoring his guardian.²⁷⁰

Again, it is worth while to note the kinds of relationship which the mythological background in general sets up with the guardian-spirit concept. The Thompson River Indians are well at the one extreme. Great as is the part which guardian-spirit practices play in the life of the tribe, there is an almost entire absence of guardian-spirit incident or motivation in their myths and traditions.²⁷¹ Moreover, not one item of the mythological setting has influenced the guardian-spirit practices in any observable way: neither the notions of cosmology, nor the transformer cycle, nor the traditional tales.

The Crow have a great bulk of guardian-spirit adventure in their myths, but of a reciprocal influence, there is almost as little as among the Thompson.²⁷² The Plains as a whole have incorporated hardly one mythological notion in all their guardian-spirit practices. The Northwest Coast, on the other hand, could not conceive their guardian-spirit complex without the background of mythology; it is from these that the great number of the guardian spirits are derived, with all their gifts and personalities and life histories. In turn, the greater part of their mythology is made up of stories of the guardian-spirit type. That is, on the Northwest Coast, these two culture traits, kept so conspicuously separate in another region,

²⁷⁰ Haeberlin: *Sbetetdaq*, p. 249, sq.

²⁷¹ Teit: *Thompson River Myths*.

²⁷² Lowie: *Crow Myths*.

have cross-fertilized one another, and become unintelligible the one without the other.²⁷³

Perhaps this trait is most conspicuous, however, among the Eskimo whose customs in regard to the guardian spirit and its relation to the Sedna myth we have already described. Mythology, then, may or may not play an important part in the guardian-spirit cycle of ideas.

This same fluid recombination of cultural elements is equally apparent when we trace the association of the guardian-spirit concept with the taboo against the killing or eating of the animal. Food taboo, in some connection or other, is universal in North America, as it is among all primitive peoples. In some tribes, its motivation was taken over emphatically by guardian-spirit attitudes, but there is no constant relation between the two. There are two antithetical attitudes in various parts of North America regarding the killing of the guardian-spirit animal: (1) Under no circumstances may the animal which represents the tutelary be killed or eaten; (2) the guardian spirit may be the animal its owner kills most readily, and may specifically grant him power to kill that species.

The first attitude is sporadic in a number of parts of North America. The Assiniboine of the Plains will not kill or eat his guardian spirit.²⁷⁴ And the neighboring Hidatsa observe the same taboo, while observing none with reference to their clan organization.²⁷⁵ The Arapaho have a similar prohibition.²⁷⁶ The Blackfoot beaver-bundle owner may not kill or eat beaver or any of the birds in his bundle.²⁷⁷

Again, on the Pacific Coast, the Maidu regard the tutelary as prohibited food,²⁷⁸ but the widest area where this usage pre-

²⁷³ Boas: *Indianische Sagen*.

²⁷⁴ Lowie: *Assiniboine*, p. 47.

²⁷⁵ Lowie: *Hidatsa Sun Dance*, p. 419.

²⁷⁶ Kroeber: *Arapaho*, p. 432.

²⁷⁷ Wissler: *Blackfoot Bundles*, p. 173.

²⁷⁸ Dixon, *Maidu*, p. 276.

vails is that of the Déné,²⁷⁹ where "under no circumstances would anything induce him willfully to kill or at least to eat the flesh" of his personal tutelary. The Copper Eskimo observe a similar prohibition.²⁸⁰

Much more widespread is an absence of such motivation of food taboos. The Montagnais obtains a vision of his guardian spirit which anticipates its capture.²⁸¹ The Mistassini, to the west, depend upon their beaver tutelaries to direct them to the capture of one of their most important sources of food supply—namely, beaver.²⁸² The Eskimo of Alaska have no taboo on eating the flesh of their tutelaries.²⁸³ The Thompson River and Lillooet have again the feeling that the guardian spirit is the animal he kills most readily.²⁸⁴ On Puget Sound one had a better chance of killing deer if one had a deer as guardian.²⁸⁵ The Winnebago hunt and eat at any time of the year the animal that they regard as their personal manitou.²⁸⁶

In all these areas, however, where the taboo on killing or eating, and the guardian-spirit motivation, have not become associated, this taboo has made other cultural connections. For the Blackfoot the mere taboo on eating is overwhelmed in a heterogeneous assortment of prohibitions: the owner must not blow the fire; fat or tallow must not be broken in the tipi; he must never sit on bare ground; no one must walk between him and the fire; he must not go barefooted in the tipi.²⁸⁷ Among the Thompson, food taboos center chiefly around pregnancy;²⁸⁸ among the Eskimo, around the hunting of animals.²⁸⁹ The

²⁷⁹ Morice: Déné, p. 205; Petitot: Monographie, p. 36.

²⁸⁰ Jenness: Copper Eskimo, p. 192.

²⁸¹ Speck: Game Totems, p. 17.

²⁸² Ibid, p. 16.

²⁸³ Dall: Alaska, p. 145.

²⁸⁴ Hill-Tout: Salish Tribes, p. 230.

²⁸⁵ Haeberlin: MSS. Puget Sound.

²⁸⁶ Radin: Clan Organization of the Winnebago, p. 12.

²⁸⁷ Wissler: Blackfoot Bundles, pp. 164 and 173.

²⁸⁸ Teit: Thompson River, p. 303.

²⁸⁹ Boas: Eskimo of Baffin Land, p. 120 sq.

Menomini have a varied assortment. To discuss taboo, then, as standing in a general functional relation to the tutelary is outside the question. It is another of the cultural traits which have made desultory connections with the idea of guardian spirits.

CONCLUSION

There is then no observed correlation between the vision-guardian-spirit concept, and the other traits with which it is associated, as it were organically, over the continent, and we have found no coalescence which we may regard as being other than fortuitous—an historical happening of definite time and place.²⁹⁰ The miscellaneous traits that enter in different centers into its make-up are none of them either the inevitable forerunner, the inevitable corollary, or the inevitable accompaniment of the concept, but have each an individual existence and a wider distribution outside this complex. In one region it has associated itself with puberty ceremonials, in another with totemism, in a third with secret societies, in a fourth with inherited rank, in a fifth with black magic. Among the Blackfoot, it is their economic system into which the medicine bundles have so insinuated themselves that the whole manner of it is unintelligible without taking into account the monetary value of the vision. Among the Kwakiutl, their social life and organization, their caste system, their concept of wealth, would be equally impossible of comprehension without a knowledge of those groups of individuals sharing the same guardian spirit by supernatural revelation. It is in every case a matter of the social patterning—of that which cultural recognition has singled out and standardized.

It is, so far as we can see, an ultimate fact of human nature that man builds up his culture out of disparate elements,

²⁹⁰ See Wissler: *American Anthropologist*, 1912, p. 22, and *Anthropology in North America*, p. 117.

combining and recombining them; and until we have abandoned the superstition that the result is an organism functionally interrelated, we shall be unable to see our cultural life objectively, or to control its manifestations.

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After the completion of Volume VI it was decided to issue future parts as separate Memoirs, assigning to them serial numbers and considering the twenty-eight papers comprised in the six volumes already published as Numbers 1 to 28. Memoirs issued subsequently are the following:

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